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of Cambridge (H.U. 1816)
18 March, 1846,
the Hon. J. G. Palfrey
of Cambridge (H.U. 1815)
30 April, 1863.

# THREE LETTERS

ADDRESSED TO

THE VEN. AND REV.

## FRANCIS WRANGHAM, M. A.

# THREE LETTERS

ADDRESSED TO

THE VEN. AND REV.

## FRANCIS WRANGHAM, M. A.

ARCHDEACON OF CLEVELAND,

IN REPLY TO HIS REMARKS

ON

## UNITARIANISM AND UNITARIANS,

*Contained in his Charge to the Clergy of his Archdeaconry,*

DELIVERED IN JULY, 1822.

BY C. WELLBELOVED.

Σοφον τι χρημα του διδαξαιλος βροτους
Λογους ακουειν των ενανλιων παρα.

*Eurip. Androm.*

"As people in general, for one reason or other, like short objections better than long answers, in this mode of disputation, (if it can be stiled such,) the odds must ever be against us; and we must be content with those for our friends, who have honesty and erudition, candour and patience, to study both sides."—*Bp. Horne, quoted by Archd. Wrangham.*

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# LETTER I.

"Mea fuit hæc in hac re voluntas et sententia, quemvis ut hoc mallem de iis qui essent idonei, suscipere quam me; me ut mallem, quam neminem."

REVEREND SIR,

WHEN the design, the spirit and the tendency of your last Charge, delivered to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of Cleveland, are considered, it will hardly be deemed necessary for me to offer any apology for the liberty I take in addressing you. In that Charge, and especially in the Appendix and Notes which accompany it, you have chosen to attack not merely the principles, but the character of Unitarians; and, adopting the unfounded calumnies of those who have preceded you in the same inglorious, but not unprofitable labours, you have greatly traduced and misrepresented both. Believing most firmly and conscientiously, that the doctrines of Unitarianism constitute that "faith which was once delivered to the saints," by the authorized messengers of God, and that the more widely they are diffused, the more surely will the interests of true religion and virtue be promoted; feeling also the most sincere respect for the illustrious defenders of these doctrines, both living and dead, whom you have endeavoured to hold up to the unmerited contempt or indignation of mankind, I should regard it as a most blameable dereliction of duty, were I not, in the absence of some better advocate, to attempt, at least, to vindicate the principles and the persons that have been so unjustly traduced.

That I have so long delayed to discharge this duty, must be attributed in part to a very delicate state of health, which has, till nearly the present moment, rendered me incapable of any further exertion than the occupations in which I am necessarily engaged, require:* in part, also, to a reluctance to undertake a task which cannot but be painful, on various accounts, and which there is too much reason to apprehend will prove fruitless. It is painful, Sir, to appear in opposition to a gentleman, whose station and talents demand respect, who is far from being a stranger to me, and to whose kindness and hospitality, I have formerly, more than once, been indebted. It is exceedingly painful to be compelled to regard such a one in the light of an ungenerous adversary; publicly to accuse, and to endeavour to convict him of unfairness, illiberality, and misrepresentation. Had your Charge, and the Notes appended to it, been worthy of your reputation for learning and talents; had they contained only sound and temperate argument, mild expostulation, or reproof; had they exhibited the result of your own investigations of the writings of Unitarians, stated in a truly Christian spirit, to guard your clergy from what you deem pernicious errors, I should have addressed you, had it appeared necessary, with feelings of a very different nature. I should have honoured you as a Christian pastor, duly watchful over his flock; I

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* These Letters were on the point of being put to press, when a very heavy domestic calamity interrupted the writer's pursuits, and deprived him both of the power and the inclination to attend to any thing unconnected with the awful dispensation of Providence, by which his faith and fortitude have been most severely exercised.

Τι γαρ ανδρι κακον μειζον, αμαρτειν
Πιστης πλουτου;

should have gladly acknowledged for you, a warm and sincere respect: not a thought, unfavourable to you, would have arisen in my own mind: not an expression would have been called for, tending to excite such a thought in the mind of any other. But, in the place of argument, you have substituted declamation, as unsuitable to the subject as it is unworthy of your character: instead of expostulation and Christian liberality, we meet with calumny and sarcasm. The groundless accusations, the vehement abuse of Horsley, Magee, and others of the same school, long ago and often refuted and repelled, are repeated, nearly in their words as unanswered and unanswerable; and where we should expect to find a "servant of the Lord, not striving, but gentle, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those who oppose themselves;" (2 Tim. ii. 24, 25,) there we behold "the accuser of his brethren," "lording it over God's heritage," and judging and condemning those who own the same master, even Christ.

My reluctance to undertake the task of replying to your Charge, though urged by a sense of duty, has been increased by the conviction, that it must be in a great measure fruitless. For, let me be ever so successful in the performance of what I undertake, I can expect little attention from those for whose information it is principally designed. You may condescend to peruse these pages; but how few of the clergy, who listened to your Charge, and on whose minds the large apparatus of Notes has no doubt produced the effect you desired, will deign to bestow upon them even a hasty glance? I well know, and you undoubtedly know much better than I, how unwilling the members of your church are to look into any thing which is the

production of a sectarian,* especially if he be branded with the name of Socinian. If you, who quote with approbation a sentence from Bishop Horne, which commends those "who have honesty and erudition, candour and patience, to study both sides," and whose station in the church seems to require that you should have an accurate knowledge, not only of the arguments of the defenders, but of the objections of the oppugners of the established creed, can yet be content, as it is evident you have been, with reading the works of Horsley and Magee, without vouchsafing to look into the answers of Priestley and Carpenter, can greater industry or impartiality be expected in those of inferior rank? Will they not be disposed to follow the example, and to adopt the language of their Archdeacon, and to loathe "the nauseating *crambe recocta*" of Unitarian vindications and replies? It requires, therefore, no prophetic foresight to discern the fate of these pages. By the majority of those from whose minds it is their object to remove the unfavourable impression which your Charge cannot fail to have produced, they will never be known to exist: by those who may chance to hear of them, they will be judged either unworthy of notice, or of too pestiferous a quality to be safely opened; and having, for a decent space, encumbered the counter and the warehouse of the bookseller, will follow many similar productions, more worthy of a better fate—

"In vicum vendentes thus, et odores,
"Et piper, et quicquid chartis amicitur ineptis."†

* "I once knew," says Bishop Watson, "a divine of the church of England, of great eminence in it, and deservedly esteemed a good scholar, who having accidentally taken up, in a friend's apartment, a book written by a dissenter, hastily laid it down again, declaring that 'he never read dissenting divinity.'" *Preface to a Collection of Theol. Tracts*, p. 19.

† Such were the apprehensions seriously entertained by the author: the call for a second edition has proved them to have been groundless.

But painful and irksome as the task, and discouraging as these anticipations of its fruitlessness may be, I am warned by yourself not to shrink from it, since "too many would be ready to conclude, if nothing was advanced in answer" to such charges, "that those charges were unanswerable." "Assertion, uncombated, though unsupported, (it is observed,) passes with but too many for argument; and the truth of the pleading is, not unfrequently, inferred from the intrepidity of the advocate." (Charge, p. 4.)—"Si taceamus multi erunt qui male de nobis sentiant, silentiumque nostrum quasi tacitum confessionem objectorum criminum interpretentur; quæ si diluere possemus, nunquam verba nostra deessent."* Or, to speak in the plain English of Prof. Porson—"As the orthodox are never weary of repeating the same baffled and exploded reasons, we heretics must never be weary of answering them: for silence, as I learn from you, Sir, is a proof of conscious impotence."†

Your Charge, Appendix, and Notes, embrace so many topics, and at the same time exhibit so little of arrangement, that it is by no means easy to reduce the subjects that require attention, into any thing like order. They may, perhaps, all be brought, in a general view, under two heads. *First*, what you allege against Unitarians and their creed, or, as you are pleased, after Bp. Horne, to denominate it, their No-creed. *Secondly*, your defence, if such it may be called, of that part of the creed of the Established Church, which relates more particularly to the doctrine of the Trinity. In the remarks which I have to offer, I shall be guided by this general division; and shall, therefore, in the *first* place,

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* *Clerici Epist. Crit.* p. 312. † *Porson's Letters to Travis*, p. 17.

endeavour to repel the accusations you have with no sparing or lenient hand, brought against us.

Before you advance to your most serious and formidable attack, you indulge in what you call *lighter skirmishings*. Some of these would scarcely call for notice, if they proceeded from any other adversary; but, coming from you, they must not be altogether despised and neglected.

Among these, is your attack on the appellations which we have either assumed, or which have been given to us by others. "To whom," you exclaim, (page 4,) "am I summoned to reply? What title do our adversaries bear stamped upon their forehead? Beneath whose standard are they enrolled?" That of Socinus, you say, we justly disclaim; and yet, with singular inconsistency, you every where call us *Socinians*. The title of Unitarians you will not allow us to use, because, as you allege, Trinitarians have as just a claim to it. That of Rational Christians is, I apprehend, sneeringly given to us by our enemies, more frequently than it is assumed by ourselves. Really, Sir, we care little about the title by which we are designated, provided it fully and justly distinguishes us from those whose religious creed differs in important points very widely from our own. We solemnly protest, indeed, against whatever would represent us as enrolled under any other standard than that of Christ himself. Call us not, therefore, Socinians, or Priestleyans, or by any other appellation, which implies that we embrace the dogmas of any uninspired man—that we submit to any other, than the teacher who came from heaven. If the name of *Unitarians* displease you, find for us another that shall be more suitable—that shall more clearly denote the leading principles of our creed, and more

effectually distinguish us from other Christian sects, and we will acknowledge our obligations to you, and adopt it.

A Christian sect, however, you will not allow us to be. In your first Charge, delivered in 1821, you were willing to grant, that though "the Socinian stands next to the Deist," yet it is at some "width of interval." You have now diminished, if you have not altogether annihilated this interval. For having cited, with apparent approbation, the maxim of Bp. Beveridge, that "a Christian is distinguished from another man, yea from a Turk, by believing a Trinity of Persons in the Divine Nature," you add, "Compare, in short, what Unitarians reject of the Christian doctrines in *omnibus*, and Deists *in toto*, (as contrasted by Bp. Burgess in his Tracts,) and what is the difference?" How "thick a drop serene" can prejudice create in the mental eye! Is there no difference, Sir, between that system, which barely acknowledges the existence and the natural attributes of God, and that which also represents him as directing the concerns of his creatures by his providence, as exercising over them a wise moral government, and as observing all their conduct, that he may hereafter be their judge?—Between that which lays no foundation for piety, and encourages no religious services, and that which leads the mind to the contemplation of God in every scene and in every event, and inculcates the duty of fervent and habitual devotion?—Between that which denies the reality, if not the possibity of divine revelation, and that which admits, as an undoubted truth, that God spake to the fathers by the prophets, and to us of later times by his Son?—Between that which treats the history of Christ as a cunningly-devised fable, and that which maintains the Divine authority, the miraculous works, the resurrection and ascension of this

great prophet of the Lord?—Between that which limits the hopes of man to this short and transitory life, and says to it's partisans, "Eat and drink, for to-morrow ye die," and that which demands an unwavering faith in a future scene of righteous retribution, and requires those who maintain it, to live ever mindful of that day, when every one "shall give account of himself to God, and receive according to his deeds?" Between such systems can the sound eye discern any resemblance? In whatever terms you may speak of the former, of the latter you cannot, with any truth or justice say, that it is "a system of cold, inefficient, disjointed ethics, introduced into the world with an empty display of the interposing Divinity." But, say what you will—say whatever ignorance of Unitarianism, or an uncharitable zeal against it and those whom you call "it's wretched partisans," may prompt, so long as this memorable test of a Christian disciple, established by the "inspired citizen of Tarsus," shall remain on record—"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved,"—so long as we can boast of such able advocates in the cause of revelation in general, and of the Christian revelation in particular, as Lardner and Priestley, —so long as we can appeal, as thank God we can with confidence, to the lives of many Unitarian professors, who, under the just influence of their principles, have been truly pious towards God, and benevolent to man, and have in all things maintained a conversation becoming the Gospel,— in every relation of life, obedient to its precepts, and in every vicissitude of life, supported and cheered by it's hopes; we may well disregard the judgment and the condemnation of fallible and bigoted men, and steadily maintain our right to a title the most honourable that can be

borne. Being reviled as unworthy of that title, we may be driven from taking our part in Bible societies, and other institutions designed to promote the Christian cause, and separated, in respect of the ordinary intercourse of life, from those to whom, though we think them in error, we would cheerfully extend the right-hand of Christian fellowship; but our peace, our satisfaction, our steadfastness, cannot thus be disturbed or shaken. We withhold from our blessed and highly-revered Lord no honour which he has required us to offer to him; and if we now prove ourselves his faithful followers, by doing the will of his Father in heaven, as he hath commanded, we trust we may look forwards with humble confidence, to our being owned by him in the great day of our account.

But before I quit this topic, on which we are so often and always so unfairly assailed, permit me to ask, what authority you have for asserting, after Bp. Burgess, that we reject the Christian doctrines *in omnibus?* You assume, as proved, the point in debate between us. You identify Christianity with your thirty-nine articles, and then revile us as unbelievers, because we do not admit the identity. Let it be fully established, that those doctrines which you esteem the essentials of the Gospel, are not, as we conscientiously regard them, its corruptions, and you will have some better ground for the charge you bring against us. But, while we maintain, and endeavour to prove, that our creed embraces every article in its fullest extent, taught by Christ and his apostles; while the records of Christian antiquity assign to what are now called the peculiar and distinguishing doctrines of the Gospel, an origin posterior, and in some instances, long posterior to their age, though you may rightly exclude us from the pale of your

church, it is as presumptuous as it is illiberal, to pronounce us unfit to be members of the church of Christ. *

Among your lighter skirmishings, may also be ranked the contemptuous and abusive terms in which you speak of Unitarians: as *sciolists and schismatics, wretched partisans, teachers ill-informed and perverse, writers who betray a shallowness as to theological criticism*, and whose works are *a nauseating crambe recocta*. Pardon me, if I say, that such language accords not either with good sense, good taste, or good manners, while it exhibits little of a truly Christian spirit. There is in it nothing of that gentleness and meekness which the apostle Paul recommended to Timothy, as becoming in the servant of the Lord. (2 Tim. ii. 24, 25.) The most contemptuous language carries with it no refutation of an opponent's principles, and serves only to excite a suspicion, that the cause in which it is employed is deficient in strength. Schismatics, according to the scriptural sense of the term *schism*, we certainly are not; and if we be sciolists—if in erudition we be inferior to the members of your church, we are so in consequence of the unjust exclusion we suffer from those seats of learning, which being national establishments, ought to be open to every member of the community, and not fenced about, by excluding religious tests. But if we be indeed *sciolists*—if we discover a "shallowness as to theological criticism," (a charge, however, which though confidently alleged against us, has not been substantiated,) I know not that we rank far below many of our neighbours, whose advantages for the attainment of sound

* To those who will condescend to read *Dissenting Divinity*, an excellent sermon on this subject, by the late Dr. Toulmin, may be recommended, entitled "The injustice of classing Unitarians with Deists and Infidels."

and extensive learning are far superior to those which we enjoy. And after all, should it be proved that Unitarian writers of the present generation are sciolists, it will not follow that their principles deserve the opprobrious name of *sciolism*. Principles which either wholly, or in their most essential particulars, have been professed, illustrated, and defended by such men as J. Crellius, Slichtingius, and other eminently learned Polish writers: and in our own country, by Peirce, Emlyn, Benson, Lardner, Lowman, Tyrwhitt, Jebb, Lindsey, and Wakefield, to whom many other equally honourable names might be added, cannot be fairly characterized as belonging to a school of sciolism.

I may also, perhaps, be allowed to place among these lighter skirmishings, the charge you advance against us, of claiming the association of great names upon the slightest pretexts. You will not allow us to rank on our side, such men as Newton, Locke, Watts, Paley, Bp. Watson, and others, whose talents, knowledge, and virtues, were such as to reflect lustre on any sect whose tenets they adopted. It appears to me, indeed, a matter of comparatively little moment, affecting in no degree the truth of our opinions, whether in claiming the sanction of these names, we be right or wrong. Nor should I notice this subject at all, had you not insinuated that in this, as in other cases, we are influenced by unworthy motives, and guilty of disingenuous conduct. If, indeed, the history or the works of these great men furnish no evidence whatever of their attachment to Unitarian principles, we are justly chargeable with presumption and dishonesty in representing them as with us. If there be some evidence, which upon a careful examination, proves weak and altogether insufficient, we ought, in charity, to be held mistaken, till we shew, that in the

absence of all proof, we are resolved obstinately to maintain our claim. You, Sir, who boast of your Bulls, and your Pearsons, and your Stillingfleets, and your Waterlands, and your Horsleys, should allow that it is natural, if not laudable in us, to glory in a Newton, a Locke, a Chillingworth, a Watts, and a Law, if we can shew cause for our glorying; and for any thing you have advanced to the contrary, this glorying of ours is still well founded. On this subject it will be proper to dwell a little; so far at least, as to prove, that the pretexts are not slight, on which we claim the association of these great names.

You ask (page 33) "Why Newton and Locke, because they never undertook to defend the doctrine of the Trinity, are therefore to be deemed Unitarians?" This, Sir, you must know, is not the ground on which it is asserted that these illustrious philosophers were Unitarians, or rather, that they were not Trinitarians. Yet, considering that they both placed themselves in circumstances, as theological writers, in which had they believed in the doctrine of the Trinity, they could scarcely have refrained from avowing their belief, their silence cannot "be cited as correctly in favour, as in discredit of the dogma." You have undoubtedly read the letters of Sir I. Newton to Le Clerc on the spuriousness of 1 John, v. 7, and on the true reading of 1 Tim. iii. 16. "If we suppose" (it has been well observed*) "that he considered these passages merely as questions of sacred criticism, which ought always to be kept entirely distinct from questions of polemical divinity, yet since the result of his critical inquiry was the *utter subversion* of two

* *Letters addressed to the Calvinistic Christians of Warwick*, &c. by an Unitarian Christian, p. 103, 104.

of the principal arguments in support of the Trinity, it was surely due to himself and to his readers, if he still believed the doctrine, to leave an explicit and solemn declaration of his belief upon record. But no such declaration, though a just regard to truth and sincerity seemed to demand it, is any where to be found." And as to the silence of Mr. Locke, can it be thought possible, that if he had been a believer in the doctrine of the Trinity, no intimation of it would appear in his commentary upon so large a portion of Paul's Epistles, or in his work on the "Reasonableness of Christianity?" Could any professed Trinitarian, in going over such ground, maintain such silence? But for withdrawing those truly great men from the ranks of orthodoxy, we have more substantial reasons than their silence. No Trinitarian, we are confident, could say of the baptismal formula, on which you lay such great stress, what Sir I. Newton has said,—"That it was the place from which they at first *tried to derive the Trinity*." We have, moreover, the direct testimony of Mr. Hopton Haynes, Deputy Assay Master of the Mint, under Sir I. Newton, with whom he was intimately acquainted. He unequivocally declared that Sir I. Newton did not believe in the pre-existence of Christ, that he disapproved of Dr. Clarke's Arianism, and expressed his firm conviction, that the time will come, when the doctrine of the incarnation, as commonly received, shall be exploded as an absurdity equal to transubstantiation. The testimony of Mr. H. Haynes cannot justly be suspected, and it can be disproved only by Sir I. Newton's papers, in possession of a noble family, who might no doubt be persuaded to lend their aid in supporting the orthodoxy of this illustrious person, if it were in their power. Dr. Waterland, whose scent of heresy was exceedingly keen, deemed him an Anti-Athanasian; as appears from a letter to Dr. Z. Grey,

in which he says, "I am sorry that no one yet has undertaken a just answer to Sir I. Newton's 14th Chapter, relating to the prophecies of Daniel, in which he slily abuses the Athanasians. That prophetical way of managing the debate, on the side of Arianism, is a very silly one, and might easily be retorted."*

In your attempt to prove the orthodoxy of Mr. Locke, it is difficult to believe that you are in earnest. "He expressly speaks," you say, "'of the mysteries of salvation.'" Of these mysteries, any Unitarian would speak in the same manner. You proceed—"Now the moral precepts of the Gospel can be no more deemed 'a mystery,' than the ethics of Aristotle, or the offices of Cicero. He must, therefore, undoubtedly mean those very tenets, which the rationalist explodes, merely because they are (what in Scripture they are denominated,) the *deep things of God.*" I will venture

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* See *Nichols's Illustrations of the Lit. Hist.* &c. vol. iv. p. 386.—Dr. Z. Grey, on this hint from his learned correspondent, undertook in the following yerr, (1736,) to answer this 14th chapter; and he had no better opinion of Sir Isaac's orthodoxy, than Waterland himself. He observes: "His applying that part of his book to the *Athanasians*, as it shews how far a man of his great parts, learning, and abilities, could stretch his fancy upon occasion, discovers, at the same time, no small inclination to disparage the *orthodox* in a covert way. It was thought by some, that Sir Isaac might have had an insidious design against the Athanasians in this whole chapter; but it was not proper to take notice of it, till Mr. Whiston, a frank and *open adversary*, had directly applied it."—*Grey's Examination of the 14th Chapter*, &c. p. 4.

And again—"Why is all this pains taken to load the memory of Athanasius? Not one word is said of Origen, St. Cyprian, or Eusebius, &c. Sir Isaac, 'tis probable, had his reasons for this piece of partiality, which it may not be proper for me to inquire into."—*Ibid.* p. 69.—So that Dr. Grey evidently considered this great philosopher as an enemy, though secretly, to the orthodox faith.

to assert, that in all our writings, you will not find a sentence so illogical, or which savours so much of sciolism as *this*. Here is your syllogism: Mr. Locke speaks of the mysteries of salvation; the moral precepts are not mysteries of salvation; ergo, Mr. Locke speaks of the doctrine of the Trinity, Atonement, &c. and was a Trinitarian.—Had a Unitarian argued in this inconsequential manner, he would have met with little mercy at your hands; and, in truth, he would have deserved little. As you have not referred to the place where Mr. Locke expressly speaks of the mysteries of salvation, I can only say, in general, that I know of no other mystery of which Mr. Locke any where speaks, but of that which is so often and so eloquently described by Paul, and so satisfactorily explained by this judicious expositor:—"The mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations, for the obedience of faith." (Rom. xvi. 25, 26.) Upon which Mr. L. observes in a note, "That the mystery he (Paul) here speaks of, is the calling of the Gentiles, and may be seen in the following words, which is that which, in many of his epistles, he calls a mystery. (See Ephes. i. 9; iii. 3—9. Col. i. 25—27.)" On the second of the passages to which he here refers, he has the following note:—"It is upon the account of his preaching this doctrine," (the union of Gentiles and of Jews in one body,) "and displaying to the world this concealed truth, which he calls every where a hidden mystery, that he gives to what he preached, the distinguishing title of *my Gospel*, (Rom. xvi. 25,) which he is concerned that God should establish them in, that being the chief design of his Epistle to the *Romans*, as here to the *Ephesians*. The insisting so much on this, that

it was the special favour and commission of God to him in particular, to preach this doctrine of God's purpose of calling the Gentiles to the word, was not out of vanity or boasting, but was here of great use to his present purpose, as carrying a strong reason with it, why the Ephesians should rather believe him, to whom, as their apostle, it was made manifest, and committed to be preached, than the Jews, from whom it had been concealed, and was kept as a mystery, and was in itself ανεξιχνιαστον, inscrutable by men, though of the best natural parts and endowments." That this mystery constituted the *deep things of God*, in Mr. Locke's apprehension, as in that of Unitarians generally, will be evident to any one who will carefully peruse the paraphrase and notes on the 2d chap. of 1 Cor. where that phrase is used. * So utterly inefficient is your first proof of the

* It may be useful to cite one of those notes.—"But we speak," (says the apostle, ver. 7,) "the wisdom of God in a mystery;" which Mr. Locke thus paraphrases: "But we speak the wisdom of God, contained in the mysterious and the obscure prophecies of the Old Testament;" and subjoins this note:—"What the spirit of God had revealed of the Gospel, during the times of the Law, was so little understood by the Jews, in whose sacred writings it was contained, that it might well be called the *Wisdom of God in a mystery*; i. e. declared in obscure prophecies, and mysterious expressions and types. Though this be undoubtedly so, as appears by what the Jews both thought and did, when Jesus the Messiah, exactly answering what was foretold of him, came amongst them; yet, by the wisdom of God in mystery, wherein it was hid, though purposed by God before the settling of the Jewish economy, St. Paul seems more particularly to mean what the Gentiles, and consequently the Corinthians, were more particularly concerned in, viz. God's purpose of calling the Gentiles to be his people under the Messiah; which though revealed in the Old Testament, yet was not in the least understood till the times of the Gospel, and the preaching of St. Paul the apostle, to the Gentiles, which therefore he so frequently calls a *mystery*. The reading and comparing Rom. xvi. 25, 26. Ephes. iii. 3—9; vi. 19, 20. Col. i. 26, 27; ii. 1—8; iv. 3, 4; will give light to this."

orthodoxy of this great man, which at the same time betrays such imperfect conceptions concerning the language of Paul, that I am almost tempted to ask, to whom is "*shallowness as to theological criticism*" justly imputable?

Still further to disprove the Anti-Trinitarianism of Mr. Locke, you observe, that "in his Synopsis of the Epistle to the Romans, he lays down, as two of his general and comprehensive heads of the Christian doctrine,

1. That by Adam's transgression, sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death reigned over all men, from Adam to Moses: and,

2. That justification to eternal life is only by grace, through faith in Jesus Christ."

These positions, which are in fact expressed as nearly as possible in Paul's own words, prove nothing respecting the peculiar views of Mr. Locke. They are such as every Unitarian willingly adopts. Before we can decide from these, whether Mr. Locke was a Trinitarian or a Unitarian, we must ascertain in what sense he understood the prineipal terms here employed. In order to do this, we have only carefully to peruse the paraphrase and notes of the first eleven chapters of this epistle; and no fair and competent judge, I am persuaded, can rise from such a perusal,

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Let any one carefully peruse Mr. Locke's notes on these passages in the Epistles to the Romans and the Ephesians; and also his important remarks on Ephes. ii. 8, and he will clearly understand what he means by *mysteries of salvation*, and "*the deep things*" of *counsels* "*of God*;" and will acknowledge that this excellent interpreter of Scripture was far removed from what is now termed orthodoxy.

without being fully convinced that the author cannot be justly claimed by Trinitarians: and this conviction will be strengthened, if the nature and tendency of his well-known work, entitled '*The Reasonableness of Christianity*, as delivered in the Scriptures,' be duly considered; a work which was denounced as 'socinianized all over,' by his vehement antagonist, Dr. Edwards, in his '*Socinianism Unmasked*,' and which it has been justly observed, is "exactly such a book as a Unitarian Christian *would*, and a Trinitarian *would not*, write."

A third proof of Mr. Locke's Trinitarianism, you find "in one of his Letters to Limborch, (dated Oates, Jan. 6, 1700,") in which "he observes, speaking of Allix's 'Judgment of the Ancient Jewish Church against the Unitarians':—*Quidam apud nos valdè paradoxum credunt doctrinam Trinitatis Judæis tribuere, et stabilimentum istius dogmatis è synagogâ petere. Alii è contra dictitant* 'hoc jugulum causæ esse, et hoc fundamento stabiliri Orthodoxiam, et everti omnia Unitariorum argumenta.' *Quid ipsa res doceat aveo videre: opem enim in hâc causâ à Judæis et Rabbinis olim non expectavi. Sed lux semper gratissima, undecunque affulgeat.*" Is it possible to strain out from this passage, any acknowledgement that Allix had really succeeded in his attempt? Because some thought that *the cause of the Unitarians was lost, that all their arguments were overthrown, and orthodoxy firmly established*, are we to conclude that Mr. Locke thought so? He does not give even a hint to his learned correspondent of his own opinion on the subject. How, indeed, could he, when he had formed no opinion; not having been able, as he says, though he had bought the work of Allix as soon as it appeared, to find either health or leisure to read it? This important fact, which is stated in the sentence immediately

preceding that which you have quoted, you have not noticed. Permit me to supply this defect. "*Allixii librum quam primùm prodiit coëmi animo legendi, sed otiosè hactenus præ manibus jacuit, nec dum sive per valetudinem sive per alias avocationes legere licuit, spero propediem pinguius et fructuosius otium. Quid de eo audias interim mihi dicas. Quidam apud nos, &c.** From this passage, therefore, your cause derives no aid.

Against all the inconclusive evidence of Mr. Locke's orthodoxy, which you have thus produced, place the fact that he was the reputed author of a paper, in one of the volumes of the Old Unitarian Tracts; that he was the avowed author of '*The Reasonableness of Christianity*,' a work which he himself acknowledges "does not accord with the doctrines commonly received;"† and also of a paraphrase and notes on some of those epistles of Paul, from which are generally derived what are called the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel, none of which are there discovered by him; whilst, as it has been justly remarked, "there is hardly a Unitarian interpretation of any disputed passage in those epistles, which he has not either suggested or adopted; and further, that he was attacked as a favourer of Socinian-

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* *Familiar Letters*, p. 457. † *Ibid.* p. 399.

His correspondent, Mr. Molyneux, relates a curious anecdote concerning this work. "As to the *Reasonableness of Christianity*, I do not find but 'tis very well approved of here," (in Ireland) "amongst candid, unprejudiced men, that dare speak their thoughts. I'll tell you what a very learned and ingenious prelate said to me on that occasion:—I asked him whether he had read that book, and how he liked it? He told me, very well; and that if my friend, Mr. Locke, writ it, 'twas the best book he ever laboured it: but, says he, if I should be known to think so, I should have my lawns torn from my shoulders. But he knew my opinion before-hand, and was therefore the freer to commit his secret thoughts in that matter to me."—*Familiar Letters*, p. 163.

ism by your own Edwards and Stillingfleet; and you will not surely be disposed to repeat your censure for our claiming the sanction and authority of this truly great and good man.

Whatever the accuracy of Unitarians may be, on the subject of Dr. Watts, it is, I will venture to assert, as perfect as your own. "Estimated by his works," you say,* "from which, and not from unauthorized reports, a writer's sentiments are to be ascertained—'Watts,' as Dr. Aikin disinterestedly remarks, 'must certainly rank among the decided advocates of orthodoxy.'" Dr. Aikin's remark was, I have no doubt, perfectly disinterested, or, as I suppose you mean it to be understood, impartial; and to his judgment I am in general disposed to shew great deference: but from my personal acquaintance with that interesting writer and most excellent man, I feel some hesitation in submitting to him, as an umpire, on the question of Dr. Watts's orthodoxy. He may have been misled by Mr. Palmer's Tract, as you seem to have been. With Dr. Watts's theological works, I more than doubt whether he had such an acquaintance as would qualify him to decide respecting his religious creed. Such works were not at all according to his taste, and in compiling the life of Watts, as a general biographer, he would not feel himself called upon to study them. Setting aside then, the biographer's opinion, and every report, whether authorized or unauthorized, let this amiable divine be judged by his works; and by them he will stand condemned as unorthodox. Let these works be the very two to which you appeal, viz. '*Useful and important Questions*, (not *Cautions*) *concerning Jesus, the Son of*

* Rather, Dr. Aikin says; for the whole sentence is borrowed from the close of his article on Watts, in the General Biographical Dictionary.

*God;*' and '*The Glory of Christ, as God-man.*'—In these, it is true, "he strongly maintains the intimate union of the Saviour with the God-head:" he also speaks frequently of the Trinity, he vindicates the worship of Jesus Christ; and with some hesitation indeed, that of the Holy Spirit. He even "freely and delightfully confesses some articles borrowed from the Athanasian Creed;" and hopes "effectually to preclude all the objections and cavils of Arian and Socinian writers:" yet, after all, he is nearly as far from orthodoxy as the person who now addresses you. For what is the doctrine of these Tracts? So far as I am able to understand them, it is this:—There is one God—the Father, the Almighty, self-existent, and eternal; the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; known and worshiped by the ancient Jews—the God who alone is acknowledged and adored by Unitarians. The human soul of Christ was pre-existent—the first-born of every creature—the beginning of the creation of God, existing by some peculiar and immediate manner of creation, formation, or derivation from the Father, before other creatures were formed; yet still a proper human spirit, but with intellectual capacities and powers vastly superior to any other human soul, or to any angel in heaven. This human soul, from the time of its creation, lay in the bosom of the Father, surveyed and approved his works of creation, and was perhaps also employed by him in adorning and disposing various parts of the new-created world, so far as any thing below pure God-head was capable of being employed in that work. To this human soul—to this angelic spirit, the God-head of the Father, which is one infinite and eternal spirit, was, in some particular principle or power of its own nature, or under some peculiar distinction and relation, intimately united; so intimately, as to warrant the application of the names,

character, and actions of the Father to this complex being. This human soul—this angel intimately and immediately united to the Godhead of the Father, appeared as the Lord Jehovah to the patriarchs and others under the Old Testament dispensation, and was thus *God-angel.* This glorious human spirit, the only-begotten Son of God, united personally to the divine nature, left the bosom of the Father, deseended from his angelic state, took human flesh into a constant partnership of his person, and became man. This human flesh was united into one person with the angel, and became the human or bodily shekinah, or constant habitation of God, or *God-man;* having then, in his complex person, the name of Deity and humanity given to him. In consequence of the in-dwelling of the one God in this one human soul and this one human body, the choice of whom for this purpose was the effect of the sovereign goodness of the great and blessed God, the human nature of Christ enjoys peculiar and extensive powers in its present glorified state, and is to be assumed into the complex object of worship; but in such a manner, as that the one eternal God may abide still the only object of worship; whether he be considered as absolute in himself, under the character of Father of all, or as united to the man Jesus Christ, and dwelling in him by a personal union. Thus the Father and the Son are both worshiped; but, when the Son is worshiped, it is as one with the Father, and to the glory of the Father.

Concerning the Holy Spirit, Dr. Watts says little in these two treatises. In his other writings on the subject of the Trinity, he maintains that both the Word and the Spirit are two divine faculties or powers in the essence of God. And, in the '*Glory of Christ, &c.*' we meet with

the following passage:—"Though I think true God-head is ascribed to him, and personal actions are sometimes attributed to him in Scripture; yet, as we are not expressly, plainly, and particularly informed, whether he be a really distinct principle or power in God, or has a proper distinct personality of himself, so neither are we expressly required to worship him, in any text of the Bible that I can find."—*Works*, vol. v. p. 294.—Now, Sir, I may safely leave any one who knows what orthodoxy is, (a knowledge, I confess, not easily to be obtained, so variable and Proteus-like is its nature,) to judge from this brief, but I am confident, just summary of Dr. Watts's views, whether he is to be ranked amongst its decided advocates.* By those who were well acquainted with him, he was charged with heresy above twenty years before his death. In a letter, written in the year 1725, the famous Mr. T. Bradbury reproved him for making "the Divinity of Christ evaporate into a mere attribute. It is a pity," he adds, "after you have been more than thirty years a teacher of others, you are yet to learn the first principles of the oracles of God. Was Dr. Owen's church to be taught another Jesus? That the Son and Spirit were only two powers in the divine nature? &c." And, thus also, Dr. Doddridge speaks of his friend, not in the language of reproach, for their opinions very nearly coincided:—"Dr. Watts maintained one Supreme God, dwelling in the human nature of Christ, which he supposes to have existed the first of all creatures; and speaks of the divine *logos*, the

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* If Dr. Watts was a decided advocate of orthodoxy, Mr. Stephens, of Exeter, to whose "admirable sermons" we are referred, (p. 39,) was a heretic; so also were the other learned writers, who are joined with him.

wisdom of God, and of the Holy Spirit, as the divine *power*, or the influence and effect of it, which he says is a scriptural *person*, i. e. spoken of figuratively in Scripture, under personal characters."

From the works to which you have appealed, as well as from others, particularly one intitled '*The Arian invited to the Orthodox Faith*,' and which I would beg leave to recommend to your attention, it appears that this amiable, but not very sound divine, maintained what is usually denominated the *in-dwelling scheme;* which you, Sir, "a teacher in Israel," cannot but know is little else than a cautious and disguised Unitarianism. For, in fact," as Dr. Priestley justly observes, "this scheme only enables persons to use the language, and to enjoy the reputation of orthodoxy, when they have no just title to either. For the divinity of the Father, *dwelling in*, or even so intimately *united to*, what is confessed to be *a creature*, is still no other than the divinity of the Father in that creature, and by no means any proper divinity of its own." If this scheme coincide with the doctrine of the Athanasian Creed, language has no meaning; if it do not, I know not how a clergyman of the church of England can call it orthodoxy. The case of Dr. Watts was not singular, but it was to be pitied. He could not be satisfied with the doctrine of the Trinity, as it was generally maintained: his mind was greatly perplexed by the language of Scripture, by the dictates of which alone he was desirous of being guided; he had a reputation for orthodoxy, which he wished to preserve; and "his mild and gentle spirit shrunk from the rude assaults, the fierce clamours, and the bitter censures, to which suspicions of *heretical pravity* would have been sure to expose him, from

the fiery and furious zealots of that day:" * therefore, though he discarded the prevailing notions respecting the Trinity, he retained as much as he could of the prevailing language; and to one who is content with looking at titles of books, or chapters, or who satisfies himself with a superficial glance at his works, he may appear to be a decided advocate for orthodoxy; but to no one else.

That he never was a Socinian I readily admit; but that before he died, he was completely Unitarian, was not, as you represent it, a "baseless assertion" (p. 34,) of Mr. Lindsey or of Mr. Belsham; nor was it "merely the *opinion* of Dr. Lardner, formed partly on a cursory view of some of his MSS., and partly on the *opinion* of a Mr. Neal, who visited in the family in which Dr. W. lived." Dr. Lardner, on whose judgment and accuracy the firmest reliance may be placed, notwithstanding Mr. Palmer's

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* *Letters to the Calvinistic Christians of Warwick*, &c. p. 143.

Mr. R. Robinson well knew the temper of such men, and has feelingly described it. Would to heaven there were none of this day, to whom the description could be applied! Writing to Mr. Lucas of Shrewsbury, he says: "The knight-errants of orthodoxy are a fierce, calumniating generation; and this I extremely dislike in them. If orthodoxy alone were in them, one would pity and pardon their nonsense;" (this from the author of the *unanswerable* "*Plea!* &c.")—but when it is accompanied, as it mostly is, by a spirit of persecution, say what they will about faithfulness and zeal, it is, and must be, an offence to God and good men. The difference between them and us is, they represent us as *enemies* to Christ; and treat us accordingly. We take them to be *babes* in Christ's family; patiently bear their babblings; and only will not suffer them to govern the family. What they are about you, I know not; but here, they are the greatest gossips, the busiest censors, and the most zealous calumniators in the country. I had rather believe all the heresies stirring, than rob one of his character; or injure, in any degree, my fellow-creatures." *Letters, &c.* p. 161.

assertion that his "letters discover something like that *imbecility*, which he reports of Dr. Watts," speaks of matters of fact, not of mere opinion. "I think," says he, in a letter to the Rev. S. Merivale of Exeter, "Dr. Watts never was an Arian, to his honour be it spoken. When he first wrote on the Trinity, I reckon, he believed *three equal divine Persons:* but in the latter part of his life, he was a Unitarian. How he became so, I cannot certainly say; but I think it was the result of his own meditations on the Scriptures. He was very desirous to promote that opinion, and wrote a great deal on the subject." And in another letter to the same friend, he observes, "I question whether you have any where in print, Dr. Watts's 'Last Thoughts on the Trinity.' They were known to very few. My nephew Neal, an understanding gentleman, was *intimate with Dr. Watts, and was often with the family where he lived.* Sometimes in an evening when they were alone, he could talk of his 'New Thoughts' concerning the person of Christ, and their great importance; and that if he should be able to recommend them to the world, it would be the most considerable thing he ever performed. My nephew therefore came to me, and told me of it; and that the family were greatly concerned to hear him talk so much of the importance of these sentiments. I told my nephew that Dr. Watts was right in saying they were important; but I was of opinion he was unable to recommend them to the public, because he had never been used to a proper way of reasoning on that subject. So it proved. My nephew being the executor, had the papers; and shewed me some of them. Dr. Watts had written a good deal, but they were not fit to be published. Dr. Watts's 'Last Thoughts' were completely Unitarian."—Surely, Sir, you are not warranted in speaking so lightly as you have

spoken of this direct testimony of a man, "whose extensive learning," as it has been well remarked, "qualified him to try the merits of every evidence, and whose unbiassed integrity and sacred veneration for truth, enabled him to pass an impartial sentence." * You assert indeed that "Mr. Palmer, in his tract intitled 'Dr. Watts no Socinian,' has conclusively shewn that both these opinions were ill-founded;" but I must beg leave again to say, that this was not a matter of mere opinion; and that Mr. Palmer has not disproved the positive testimony of Dr. Lardner. This, I am persuaded, would be readily acknowledged by any impartial person who would read two excellent papers published in the *Monthly Repository*, vol. viii. entitled '*Strictures on a recent publication of Mr. Palmer's.*' I cannot but regret that this work, proceeding as it does from the Unitarian school of "schism and sciolism," will of course be considered by you as unworthy of your attention.

Dr. Lardner states that Dr. Watts was a Unitarian several years before his death; and this statement, as I have already shewn, is not contradicted by any thing in the works which he published two years before his death, and to two of which, after Mr. Palmer, you particularly refer as decisive of his orthodoxy at that time. For whatever the language of these works may be, the substance of the doctrine is Anti-Trinitarian—it is Unitarian. But Dr. Lardner further affirms that his 'Last Thoughts' were *completely Unitarian.* This judgment was formed on the perusal of MSS. destroyed by the executors of Dr. Watts;

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* Even Dr. Horsley thus speaks of Lardner:—"The learned and the candid Lardner, whose judgment must have been biassed by his opinions in prejudice of the writings," (the Epist. of Ignatius) "*if any thing could have biassed his judgment in prejudice of the evidence of truth.*"—*Letters*, &c. p. 124.

no one therefore, in the present day, is warranted to contradict the affirmation of Dr. Lardner: and as it is utterly inconsistent with the acknowledged character of that cool and judicious writer to speak so strongly and decidedly, without some substantial reason, it is highly probable, to say the least, that amongst these MSS. there were some written after the time of the last publication, and containing a more explicit avowal of Unitarian opinions.* And that such was the case, we may justly conclude, from the character and style of one of them rescued from the flames by Dr. Doddridge, entitled '*A Solemn Address to the Deity*,' which appears to have been drawn up by Dr. Watts, on a review of what he had written on the subject of the Trinity, and therefore subse-

* In the Monthly Review for March, 1782, there is some curious information relating to these MSS., which it may be well to recite here.

"That the Doctor had altered his opinion with respect to some points of what is called orthodoxy, is undeniable. This is a subject that *some* of his encomiasts shrink from with concealed mortification, and would, if possible, consign to oblivion, as it cannot be remembered, without bringing some reflection either on the Doctor himself, or their own darling cause. But it would be in vain to deny a fact known to *many*, who were interested in making it public. It was known to Dr. Lardner, and by him communicated to the late excellent Mr. Merivale of Exeter, from whose mouth the writer of the present article immediately received it. Dr. Watts's papers (many of which contained the most explicit renunciations of some of his former sentiments with respect to the doctrine of the Trinity) were mutilated, and published in a very imperfect manner. Some were *wholly suppressed*; and it was with difficulty that Dr. Doddridge could rescue from destruction, a certain curious paper respecting the Trinitarian controversy, published among his posthumous works, intitled '*A Solemn Address to the Deity*, &c.' The conduct of some of Dr. Watts's friends in this affair, was so disingenuous, that it called forth very loud complaints from those who were acquainted with the secret: and it was but a short time before Dr. Doddridge embarked for Lisbon, that he complained to Mr. Merivale of unfair conduct, both with respect to Dr. Watts and himself, to whose charge, in conjunction with the late Dr. D. Jennings, his papers were intrusted for publication."

quent to the publication of the '*Important Questions, &c.*' Now it is observable that this interesting and affecting Address is directed to the Father alone, as the *only true God, the Supreme Being.* Christ is here spoken of *as a man in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;* as *an illustrious Person,* who possesses divine dignity, not of himself, but only as united to the true and eternal God; but not a word is said of his pre-existence as a human soul; while the Holy Spirit is mentioned merely as the power and influence of the Almighty, exerted in the execution of all his purposes. * "It is clear indeed," as the author of the '*Strictures, &c.*' observes, "that the writer's sentiments upon the matter in question, were far from being absolutely settled: his creed was not altogether fixed; he had not, as is the case of some men, renounced inquiry, and closed his understanding against evidence and conviction:" yet that he was no Trinitarian at that time, is evident from the general strain of this affecting Address, and from some remarkable passages occurring in it. What believer in the doctrine of the Trinity, ever held such language as the following? "Hadst thou told me plainly *in any single text,* that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are three real distinct Persons, in thy divine nature, I had never suffered myself to be bewildered in so many doubts, nor embarrassed with so many strong fears of assenting to the mere inventions of men, instead of divine doctrine. Or, hadst thou been pleased so to express and include this proposition in the several scattered parts of thy book, from whence my reason and conscience might with ease *find out,* and with certainty *infer* this doctrine, I should have joyfully employed all my reasoning powers,

* *Letters to the Calvinistic Christians of Warwick,* p. 143.

with their utmost skill and activity, to have found out this inference, and ingrafted it into my soul."

In the other MS. to which you have referred, intitled '*A faithful Inquiry, &c.*' I readily grant that "the sentiments are as remote from Unitarianism as those of the volumes above quoted or referred to;" but not more so—*i. e.* they are Unitarian in substance, clothed in something like the language of orthodoxy. They are indeed remote from genuine Trinitarianism.—But on this subject I need add no more. When the sentiments even of the works to which you have so confidently appealed, are thoroughly examined, and it is further considered that we have no where Dr. Watts's *last sentiments* in print, every candid reader, I apprehend, will conclude with me that you have been too hasty in pronouncing the question of Dr. Watts's orthodoxy to be "set at rest."

I am not aware that Watson, Paley, and Sir Wm. Jones, have been generally, or with any degree of confidence claimed by us. That their orthodoxy has been suspected, even by their friends, is well known; and what you have offered in their defence is by no means sufficient entirely to remove such suspicions. I cannot believe that any Unitarian writer has been so unreasonable as to assert, or to intimate, that because Watson and Paley "had never put out any special disquisition upon the Trinity, they of course disbelieved them; it is not the usual habit of our minds to be satisfied with such evidence as this, upon any subject. Nor yet can we be satisfied with your proofs of their orthodoxy. On the three discourses of Paley, to which you refer as decisive, no one, I am persuaded, who carefully peruses them, will be disposed to lay any stress;

and your extract from Watson proves only that he did not pretend to explain the doctrine of the Incarnation, not that he believed it. I do not mean, however, to call in question his faith in that article. To a certain extent, he and Paley may have been orthodox: but whatever their faith may have been, they had learnt from an apostle "a more excellent way;" they had that "charity which vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, thinketh no evil, and rejoiceth in the truth." That both these eminent men should make whatever orthodoxy they possessed go as far as possible, was nothing else than might be expected from their habits, station, and connexions. That the portion which fell to their share was not very large, will inevitably be suspected by all who fairly consider the character of the 'Collection of Theological Tracts,' with its admirable preface and catalogue of Theological writers by the one; and the dedication of 'The Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy,' by the other, to the Unitarian Bishop of Carlisle.

If any one have claimed Dr. Wallis as a Socinian, I agree with you that he has done so unwarrantably. But I am not aware of any such claim having been advanced: nor has he been classed, as you assert, by Mr. Belsham, "among Unitarian expositors." He takes his place in the '*Calm Inquiry*,' with Augustin, Calvin, Hooker, South, and others, amongst those Trinitarians who are called Nominalists; who "maintain that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, are three distinctions in the one self-existent Deity, analogous to the faculties of understanding, will, and power in men; to which three distinctions, personal terms may be applied."—*Calm Inquiry*, 2nd edit. p. 337. In a note subjoined to this definition, Mr. Belsham

observes, "Dr. Wallis, Savilian Professor of Mathematics at Oxford, in his 'Considerations on the Trinity,' p. 7, (1693) speaks of it as 'a silly mistake, that a divine person is as much as to say, a divinity, or a God, when indeed a divine person is only a *mode*, or *respect*, or *relation* of God to his creatures. He bears to his creatures these three relations, modes, or respects; that he is their Creator, their Redeemer, their Sanctifier: this is what we mean, and all that we mean, when we say God is three Persons. He hath those three relations to his creatures; and is thereby no more three Gods, than he was three Gods to the Jews, because he calls himself the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' "This truly Unitarian doctrine," Mr. Belsham adds, "received the marked approbation of the University of Oxford, while Dr. Sherlock's hypothesis, 'that the three Persons of the Trinity were three distinct infinite minds,' underwent a public censure. With this modal hypothesis Mr. Lindsey satisfied himself to remain in the church, and to use the liturgy some years after he became a Unitarian."

That Mr. Belsham is justified in calling this doctrine Unitarian, will be acknowledged by all who fairly appreciate the nature and tendency of this modal hypothesis, "which, in fact, annihilates the proper personality, and thereby the real existence of the Son and Spirit; and though the advocates of this hypothesis hold the language of proper Trinitarians, yet, in ideas, they coincide altogether with the Sabellians, or even with the proper Unitarians."—*Calm Inquiry*, p. 338. And with this judgment your favourite Bp. Bull agrees; "Adde ergo, Personam sine essentiâ concipi non posse, nisi statueris Personam in Divinis, nihil aliud esse quam merum τροπον ὑπαρξεως quod plane Sabellianum.

Such, however, was Dr. Wallis's conception of *persona*. "Persona," he observes, "in its true and ancient sense, before the schoolmen put a forced sense upon it, did not signify a man simply, but one under such and such circumstances or qualifications; so that the same man, if capable of being qualified thus, and thus, and thus, might sustain three Persons, and these three Persons be the same man."—*Letters, &c.* No. 7. And yet you make your boast of Dr. Wallis as a "firm believer in the orthodox doctrine!" You of course know what is your own faith on the subject of the Trinity, but your clergy and your readers can have no clear conceptions of it: for Trinitarians of every school—Bull and Wallis—Waterland and Watts—Realists and Nominalists—Modalists and In-dwellers—are all cited by you with equal respect, and treated as equally orthodox. This reminds me of a passage in one of the Old Socinian Tracts, in which the writer says—"Our opposers do indeed all go under the common name of Trinitarians, but are (in truth) a great many several and contrary sects. They all cast up their caps, and cry, *Trinity, Trinity*: but the ideas they have of the Trinity, and consequently their faiths concerning this (pretended) mystery, are so many, and so contrary, that they are less one party among themselves, than the far more learned and far greater number of them (I mean hereby the Nominal Trinitarians) are one party with us." How, indeed, can very precise and accurate ideas on this subject be expected in those who subscribe to such inconsistent creeds as the Pseudo-Athanasian and the Nicene, and in the same religious service, profess their faith in one God, the Father Almighty; and almost in the same breath, address their prayers to two other Gods—God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost!

I do not wonder that you dislike to be reminded of the ever-memorable contest at the end of the 17th century, to which Mr. Belsham alludes, in the note above quoted: yet the evident irritation under which you exclaim, "Why am I to be harassed with the squabbles of South and Sherlock?" does not well accord with the dignity of your station and character. The controversy of which you have spoken thus contemptuously, was carried on by some of the most eminent divines of your church; by whom it was regarded as of high importance: and by its termination, the character of your church was deeply affected; the learned University of Oxford, under the unholy influence of political party feeling, having sanctioned what can in strictness be regarded as nothing else than an heretical exposition of the doctrine of the Trinity.

While endeavouring to silence "sectarian rumour, always ready to claim upon the slightest pretexts the association of great names," (p. 34,) it would have been well, if you had been more cautious not to retain those which are well known to have been withdrawn from the ranks of orthodoxy. You have quoted with approbation, a passage from Archdeacon Blackburne, in which Mr. Robert Robinson is spoken of as the author of an unanswered and unanswerable pamphlet, intitled 'A Plea for the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ;' and your readers cannot fail to conclude, that this pamphlet, to which you more than once refer, still remains unanswered; and that the author is to be still classed amongst the advocates of the Trinitarian doctrine. The fact, however is, that his work was most completely refuted by Mr. Lindsey;—that Mr. Robinson relinquished the faith for which he had

pleaded, and died a Unitarian. * Dr. Priestley, in the sermon which he preached on occasion of his death, says of him, "Notwithstanding his long attachment to the doctrine of the Trinity, yet continuing to read and think on the subject, he came at length to change his opinion; and before he died, he was one of the most zealous Unitarians." His biographer has asserted that his change was occasioned by a serious perusal of Mr. Lindsey's Answer to that work, which Archdeacon Blackburne represents as unanswerable.

But a more serious imputation on this head, arises from the use you have made of the authority of Dr. Whitby,—whose words you have cited, (p. 65,) in support of a doctrine which he afterwards abandoned as unscriptural. It can hardly be deemed candid or honourable, respectful to the dead, or just to the living, to produce to the world, as the opinions of any one, what he has publicly renounced as 'mistakes and errors.' Yet this you have done in the case of this eminently learned and conscientious divine; representing him as the advocate of principles, which it was amongst the last labours of his life to prove had no foundation in the word of God. Candour and

* In a letter to a friend, dated May 7, 1788, two years before he died, Mr. Robinson says, "As to personality in God, a Trinity of Persons, I think it the most absurd of all absurdities; and in my opinion, a man who hath brought himself to believe the popular doctrine of the Trinity, hath done all his work; for after that there can be nothing hard, nothing inevident; the more unintelligible, the more credible; and as this serves the purpose of implicit faith in pretended guides, priests will always try to keep it in credit. The Bible reads easy, if we consider God *one*; Jesus, the *Son* of God; and the Holy Ghost, the *influence* of God."—*Miscellaneous Works*, vol. iv. p. 454.

truth, seem at least to demand, that when pressing his Commentary * into your service, you should have made your readers acquainted with his Τ;ερα: Φρονπιδες—his 'Last Thoughts;' in which 'Short Treatise,' as he himself declares, "he seriously considered all he had said in his Commentary to the contrary" of the Unitarian sentiments he finally adopted, "and fully answered the most considerable places he had then produced, for confirmation of the doctrines he there *too hastily* endeavoured to establish." If "sectarian rumour" is to be severely reprehended for being "ready to claim upon the slightest pretexts, the association of great names," what shall be said of churchmen, who rank amongst the advocates of their principles, those who avowedly abandoned them as untenable? If the "silence of Newton and Locke" is not to pass for consent to these doctrines, which they might have disavowed, is the open and strenuous denial of certain dogmas, not to prevent such a man as Whitby from being cited in support of them? What would you, or any other Protestant say of the Roman Catholic writer, who should quote the immortal Chillingworth, in defence of the infallibility of the Romish Church? Where is the difference between claiming the authority of those who never did belong to our party, and retaining those who openly deserted it?

Are we to consider it as a compensation for withholding from us Robinson and Whitby, that you give us Gagneius? (p. 28.) Fond as we are said to be of great names, and little scrupulous in asserting our claims to them, I

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* Here, as in many other places, there is no specific reference. I therefore only presume that the Commentary is quoted.

assure you, we have too much honesty to make any pretences to this learned writer. Gagneius was no "disciple of the Socinian school," but an orthodox doctor of the Sorbonne.* You have been misled by the defender of the Sacred Classics; or, as I suspect, you have misunderstood him; and the crimination designed through Gagneius for luckless Unitarians, falls, in fact, on those to whom he belonged, and who have been declared, *ex cathedrâ*, "to be more near and dear by far," to churchmen, "than some," (Unitarians) "who affecting to be called their Protestant brethren, have no other title to the name of Protestants, than a Jew or a Pagan." †

Leaving you then in the quiet and unenvied possession of this orthodox member of the Catholic church, ‡ I beg leave to subscribe myself,

Reverend Sir,

Your obedient servant,

C. WELLBELOVED.

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* He died when the name of Socinus was scarcely known.

† Horsley's Letter to the Clergy of the Diocese of St. David's.

‡ This learned ecclesiastic, who held the high offices of preacher and almoner to Francis I. and chancellor of the church of Paris, Blackwall calls a "remarkably impudent" writer. *Sacred Classics*, &c. p. 255, edit. 1725.—*Du Pin* has spoken of him with more respect, and at the same time, with a greater regard to truth: "Cet auteur a été de son temps à la cour et parmi les Sçavans en reputation de pieté, de sçavoir et d'éloquence. Ses ecrits nous font connoître qu'il sçavoit les langues, et qu'il avoit une érudition plus que mediocre, l'esprit net et le jugement solide."—*Nouv. Biblioth.* &c. tom. xiv. p. 183.

# LETTER II.

Διαβολη καιρῳ μεν ισχυραν εργαζεται τοις ακουουσι την ὑπολημψιν, χρονῳ δε παντων ασθενεστερα γινεται.—*Demosthenes.*

"By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and *yet* true."—*Paul.*

REVEREND SIR,

HAVING noticed, with perhaps more than sufficient minuteness, your "lighter skirmishings," I now proceed to meet your more serious attacks.

"Upon what," you ask, (p. 8,) "do Unitarians sustain themselves? Do they wholly disallow the archives of Revelation?" Such a measure, you apprehend, would be too hardy even for that spirit of controversy, to which principally (as productive of a kind of polemical dexterity) you suppose we owe our protracted existence. Indeed you acknowledge, though with a coldness and an apparent reluctance, not very creditable, when the excellent character, and the valuable services of that distinguished author are considered, that "to one of their school, Dr. Lardner, the Christian world is indebted for laborious illustrations of its historical truths." "How then," you ask again, "do they surmount the mass of obstacles every page of Scripture, explained upon correct principles of interpretation, must throw in their way? Alas," you answer, "there are a thousand arts of evasion." Three or four of the thousand

you then go on to specify. With what justice you charge us with having recourse to these, I will now examine.

"In order," you say, "to retain their scrupulous and fluctuating adherents, some deny the plenary inspiration of the sacred oracles; confining even the partial inspiration, which they still graciously deign to tolerate, to a particular class of phrases or modes of speech." Without stopping to inquire how *scrupulous* adherents can be retained, by a measure which you deem so daring and unwarrantable; or to what portions of the Scripture, the last curious clause in this sentence can possibly relate; or with what propriety inspiration can be said to be tolerated; I at once admit, that if, by plenary inspiration, you mean an inspiration extending to every book now deemed canonical, and to every passage of every book, Unitarians must plead guilty to the charge of denying it. To such inspiration we do not find the sacred writers laying any claim; the subjects of many of the books of Scripture do not require such a perpetual miraculous interference; the hypothesis that the writers were so inspired, has exposed the oracles of truth to numberless cavils, and encumbered the advocates of revelation with many needless and perplexing difficulties. On carefully examining the books of Scripture, we perceive many things which convince us that the precious "treasure" of divine revelation, was committed to "earthen vessels;" and we do not hold ourselves bound to honour the vessels with all the esteem, with which we regard the treasure they contain. We most cordially believe, and most gratefully acknowledge, that "God at sundry times and in divers manners, spake in time past to the fathers by the prophets;" and that "in these last days, he hath spoken to us by his Son;" and we receive with profound reverence, whatever bears the autho-

rity of His name. We are not so destitute of right reason, or of common sense, as to confine inspiration to any "class of phrases or modes of speech:" we extend it to all that Moses and the Prophets, Jesus and his Apostles, have delivered as from God. We receive the books of Scripture, as authentic records of revelation. The historical books, which form so large a portion of the Bible, we regard as a faithful representation of facts, on the truth of which we may confidently rely. The books of Moses, in particular, we receive as a complete record of the revelations made to the patriarchs, and of all that God appointed Moses to speak and to do, in respect of the chosen people. The books of the Evangelists, in like manner, we receive, and most highly value, as containing the mind and will of God, as made known by his beloved Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. The prophecies both of the Old and New Testament, as to the substance of them,—if not the words—we ascribe to immediate inspiration. The devotional and the didactic parts of the Old Testament, we believe to have been written under the influence of that spirit of piety and wisdom, which was the immediate and natural effect of that knowledge of God and his laws, which had been supernaturally communicated to a succession of holy men and prophets. And as to the epistolary writings which constitute so interesting and important a part of the New Testament, we reverence them, as exhibiting clear and comprehensive views of Christian doctrine; imparted to the writers either by the personal instruction of our Lord, while on earth, or by occasional intercourse after his ascension, or by that spirit which, being sent from God, guided the apostles of our Lord into all truth. "In their representations of Christian doctrine, and in their directions as to Christian duty," we hold that "the apostles are to be

regarded as the ambassadors of Christ, and the oracles of God; and, therefore, as soon as any book is ascertained to have been written by an apostle, its divine authority, as to faith and practice, becomes unquestionable." (*Carpenter's Reply to Magee*, p. 82.) Such are the opinions of Unitarians in general, on the subject of the inspiration of the Scriptures, and such the respect which is paid by them to the records of divine truth; and to these opinions, no reasonable objection, I maintain, can be urged. It is true, that we do not think the sacred historians are in every instance perfectly correct; because we find discrepancies in their relations of the same events; but these do not at all impair, but on the contrary, increase our confidence in their general veracity. It is true, that we cannot always assent to the reasoning of an apostle, or to his application of the ancient prophecies; but we distinguish between the argument and the doctrines which it is designed to recommend and enforce. The argument we may sometimes deem "inconclusive," but we never doubt that the doctrine is from heaven. You say that "it is idle to profess respect for the Scriptures, when we refuse them for the purposes for which they were avowedly given, as the rule of both faith and practice; or, when by partial exceptions and petty hyper-criticisms, we bring their general authority into question." True, Sir, it would be idle, and worse than idle, to act thus: but we deny that such conduct is justly imputed to us. The general authority of the Scriptures, we are as anxious as you can be, to establish. It is only in cases of comparatively little moment, not at all affecting the great and leading principles of the sacred writings, that we question their authority. As a complete rule of faith and practice we desire to take them; to no other rule do we ever appeal; and I will venture to assert, that in no

one instance, does our rejection of their plenary inspiration lead to the rejection of any Scripture doctrine, or any Scripture precept.

In our views on the subject of plenary inspiration, we differ little, if at all, from many illustrious writers, whom you would hardly venture to brand as "schismatics and sciolists;" such as Erasmus, Grotius, Castalio, Le Clerc, and even your own Paley, Powell, and Burnet. I shall have occasion, in the course of this letter, to cite passages from two or three of these; at present, therefore, I shall only add, that I suppose every one is acquainted with the 'Five Letters' on this subject, extracted from the celebrated work, entitled 'Sentimens de quelques Theologiens de Hollande,' rightly attributed to Le Clerc, and not refuted by the very learned and eminent Prebendary Lowth.* Another treatise on this subject, unhappily imperfect, is not so generally known; to which, however, you cannot be a stranger. I mean a fragment of an important work, begun by Castalio, entitled '*De arte dubitandi et confitendi, ignorandi et sciendi*,'† and published by Wetstein, in his treatise '*De Interpretatione Novi Testamenti*,' near the end of the second volume of his edition of the Greek Testament. Permit me to recommend to you a re-perusal of this invaluable piece, under the full persuasion that it will lead

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* *A Vindication of the Divine Authority, and Inspiration of the Writings of the Old and New Testament, in answer, &c. &c.*

† The *ars confitendi* is pretty generally practised; but how few know any thing of the *ars dubitandi!* "The title itself," says the excellent Lindsey, "has more in it to be learned than you find in many large books; for it is no ordinary attainment to know when to doubt, and when to be assured, and when to be ignorant. The greater part never own their doubting, or being ignorant of any thing."—*Vind. Priestleianæ*, p. 123.

you to put a more favourable, and, at the same time, a fairer construction on the sentiments of Unitarians respecting inspiration; and to abstain, in future, from charging them with practising "arts of evasion," in avowing principles held by them in common with some of the most illustrious members of the reformed churches.

You go on to say, (p. 9,) "Should these," (viz. the phrases or modes of speech to which Unitarians confine inspiration; but what these are, I cannot imagine,) "unfortunately for their flimsy theory, occasionally prove intractable, they have the convenient resources of conjectural criticism at command; they can punctuate, they can transpose, they can obliterate—in certain cases, avowedly without the authority of one single manuscript, or one solitary version; though by what is, nevertheless, deemed a most happy and indisputable emendation!" It is indeed very true, that in common with other critics, we "have the resources of conjectural criticism at command," and you will not deny, that in certain circumstances, and under proper regulations, these resources may be legitimately employed. If it were not so, would your own Secker, Newcome, and Lowth, have applied to them, as they have done, in the Old,* or Markland and Michaelis in the New Testament? † Conjectural criticism is, I ac-

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* It must indeed be granted, that on several accounts, conjectural criticism may be more readily tolerated in the Jewish, than in the Christian Scriptures.

† See *Bowyer's Conjectures*, and *Michaelis's Introduction to the New Testament*, chap. x. sect. iv.

It is true, that these eminent critics have not ventured to substitute their conjectures for the readings in the received text; yet the principles on which

knowledge, a desperate remedy, and very liable to be abused. It is the very last resource to which a judicious critic will apply, and where it affects any doctrinal question, he will cautiously refrain from applying to it at all. Prove any Unitarian critic to have abused this resource, or to have availed himself of it, in endeavouring to establish his doctrine, and inflict upon him the punishment he justly deserves. *—It must also be granted, not only that we can, but that we do punctuate; and you surely cannot mean to insinuate that this is an illegitimate aid in the interpretation of ancient writings. Who has more freely, or with greater and better effect, changed the common punctuation of the

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Michaelis has argued in sect. ii. of his 10th chap. would naturally lead to this. He acknowledges, indeed, that "there are some few passages in the New Testament, *loci affecti*, in which we have been hitherto able to derive no assistance, either from manuscripts, fathers, or versions; and which demand, therefore, the aid of critical conjecture." And he instances Rom. viii. 2, which, he says, he cannot read without supposing that the apostle wrote νομος του πνευματος ΚΑΙ της ζωης, assigning precisely such reasons as have been given for reading ὢν ὁ, instead of ὁ ὢν, in Rom. ix. 5. But there is, in truth, no necessity for altering the reading in either case; and in both cases it would be equally unwarrantable.

* This cannot be proved, at least with respect to Unitarians of modern times. Have any orthodox critics ever expressed themselves on this subject more strongly than the Editors of the Improved Version, against whom all these charges are levelled? "Attempts," say they, "have been made to correct the received text by critical conjecture. This is a remedy which ought never to be applied but with the utmost caution, especially as we are furnished with so many helps for correcting the text from manuscripts, versions, and ecclesiastical writers. This caution is doubly necessary, where the proposed emendation affects a text which is of great importance in theological controversy, as the judgment of the critic will naturally be biassed in favour of his own opinions. It ought, perhaps, to be laid down as a general rule, that the received text is in no case to be altered by critical, or, at least, by theological conjecture, how ingenious and plausible soever."—See *Introd. to Imp. Vers.* p. xvii. 4th edit.—To this rule the Editors have scrupulously adhered.

text of the New Testament, than your own Markland?* Even Horsley, who has censured the conjectures of Newcome, has not disapproved of punctuating, nor abstained from it. Are the points also to be deemed inspired? Call in question our judgment, if you please; but do not deny us the right, that all other critics and interpreters of Scripture enjoy.†—"They can transpose." In this there is no violation of any canon of criticism; nor any thing contrary to the practice of the best and most cautious critics. Newcome, and Lowth, and Blayney, and Stock, and Michaelis, and Griesbach, with many others of the greatest name, have all transposed; and, by so doing, have removed many difficulties, and illustrated several obscure passages of Scripture. Do not make that criminal in us, which in others, is at least innocent, if not praiseworthy.—The charge of obliterating, without any external authority, is of a more serious character. That there may arise amongst us occa-

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* See *Bowyer's Conjectures, &c.* passim.—The learned printer justly observes, in his preface: "Qui bene distinguit, bene docet, is no less true in criticism than in doctrine." He also cites, among other authorities, Grotius, on Mark xiv. 69.—"Cum veteres libros sine distinctionibus scribi solitos constet, sequitur, postea ex describentium judicio additas: quare et nunc de illis judicium liberum esse debet."

† In a note, (p. 55,) we are referred to the late Bp. Middleton's work on the Greek article, for some general remarks on punctuation. I cannot here enter into the examination of them; but I do not hesitate to say, and I could easily prove, that for the most part, they are very incorrect. He talks of not rashly disturbing the established punctuation. I would have nothing done rashly; but when and by whom, was the punctuation of the received text established? Does it rest on any better authorities, or is it in a purer state than the received text itself? And the weight of these authorities, and the true state of that text, the Archdeacon of Cleveland has not to learn. Let those who have, read the Prolegomena of Griesbach with the attention they deserve.

sionally, some whose temerity appals their friends, while it provokes the indignation of their adversaries, is unquestionable. But, for such boldness, Unitarianism itself is not answerable. I shall hereafter produce a distinguished member of your own church, who could obliterate, without the sanction of either MSS. or versions. In page 55, you particularly refer to the "garbling" of Mr. Evanson, whose "mangling and mutilation" of the New Testament, was as offensive to the Unitarians in general, as to more orthodox believers. It cannot, surely, be unknown to you, that he was strenuously and successfully opposed by Dr. Priestley himself, whose work has obtained merited praise from a Bampton lecturer.* I will venture to say, that with the exception of Mr. Evanson and his school, which is by no means large, Unitarian critics are as adverse to emendations of the text, and obliteration, altogether unsanctioned by external authority, as those of any other sect.

You proceed in your work of crimination: "They can misquote the early Fathers, and other ancient authorities; they can mis-represent, or garble, the statement of their adversaries; they can qualify, and accommodate, their own: struggling, by all these various processes, to make the un-

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* The Rev. T. Falconer, who, at the same time that he acknowledges the merit of Dr. Priestley's Answer to Evanson, and his own obligations to him, bears his reluctant testimony to the disgraceful bigotry of the learned body to which he belongs. In a note, (p. vii.) he says, "To guard against misrepresentation, I wish to observe, that my discourses comprise a much smaller extent of inquiry than Dr. Priestley's Letter, which contains a large proportion of very admirable argument; and if I should not have my meaning distorted by a calumnious gang of local inquisitors and familiars, I would say, that what I have done may be considered as supplementary to the orthodox parts of Dr. Priestley's Reply."

wary believe, that in the conventicle alone the unpolluted doctrines of Christianity are to be found." Is it uncandid to suppose, that by using the term *conventicle*, you intended to insult us? or will you plead, after the example of the Archdeacon of St. Albans, whose spirit, as well as whose language, you too successfully imitate, that it is a mere archaism of your style.* Considering the state in which Unitarians are now placed by the legislature of their country, I cannot but deem it an offence against both truth and good manners, to charge them with holding unlawful religious assemblies. This, however, is a light matter, in comparison of the rest of this opprobrious passage, which does not merely "involve an apparent incivility," (p. 23,) but represents us as persons devoid of integrity; as writers, on whose fidelity no reliance is to be placed; who deliberately sacrifice truth and good conscience to serve party purposes. I fearlessly affirm, that you cannot substantiate these severe accusations. We plead no exemption from error. We may, in some instances, have misunderstood ancient authorities; and, through inadvertency, have misquoted ancient writings; but we scorn all artful and disingenuous means, either of opposition or defence. In learning, we may be inferior to those who unjustly monopolize the highest advantages for a learned education; but in the love of truth and candour, we will yield to none. I wish to appear as the defender, rather than the panegyrist of the advocates of Unitarianism; but I cannot refrain, on this occasion, from declaring, that so far as I am acquainted with their writings, none evince a higher tone of moral feeling—none are more fair and ingenuous than they.

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* See *Horsley's Tracts in Controversy with Dr. Priestley*, p. 288.

"Qui carpit mores labe carere decet." If I were disposed to recriminate, I should not have to look far for matter of recrimination. I know not of any Unitarian writer who need to shrink from a comparison on the points of accuracy and fairness of quotation from an adversary's work, with Waterland, Horsley, Magee, or even the Archdeacon of Cleveland.

"Finally," you add, "as a portion of the pure gold will still remain in spite of all their efforts, they endeavour to huddle it up under strained analogies, and violent or incongruous metaphors." To huddle up gold under violent and incongruous metaphors, is a metaphor so violent and incongruous, that it is by no means easy clearly to comprehend its meaning. Perhaps, however, you intend to say, what has been often more plainly, but yet not truly said, that in order to evade the force of passages of Scripture cited against us, we refuse to understand them literally, and have recourse to a figurative interpretation. This, at least, your quotations from Blackburne and Hales seem to suggest. The judgment of Archdeacon Blackburne, I am generally disposed to treat with great respect; but in this instance, I require a more particular statement of the ground on which it was formed; especially, as the maxim of your second authority, the ever-memorable John Hales, is no other than that which Dr. Priestley adopted. Dr. Horsley had said, that "the Unitarians pretend not that their doctrine is to be found in the plain, literal sense of holy writ? on the contrary, they take the greatest pains to explain away the literal meaning." To which Dr. P. replied, "If you had really read any Unitarian treatise at all, you must have known that this representation is the reverse of the fact. We Unitarians certainly pretend at least, whether

we are able to prove it or not, that the *general tenor, and plain literal sense of Scripture* is in our favour; that they are only *particular texts*, and those ill understood, that you avail yourselves of; and we say that there is no difficulty in interpreting even those texts in perfect consistency with the Unitarian doctrine, if the true idiom of the language be considered." * And surely, Sir, it will be allowed that there is a peculiar idiom prevailing in the writings of the Old and New Testament, and that the rules of interpretation justify and require a constant attention to this idiom. And I appeal to every impartial and qualified judge, as to the truth of what I assert, when I say, as I confidently do, that we have recourse to a figurative sense of passages in no instances, which that idiom does not fully warrant. It is a singular circumstance that the charge you advance against Unitarians, is the very reverse of that which was anciently brought against them. For "the orthodox, even after the council of Nice, complained of the advantage which the Unitarians had in appealing to the literal sense of the Scriptures. 'If,' says Gregory Nyssen, 'a man rests in the bare letter, so far he judaizes' (*i. e.* is a Unitarian) 'in opinion, and has not learned that a Christian is not the disciple of the letter, but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.'" † Nor are the members of the Established Church exempt from the very charge alleged against Unitarians: it is triumphantly advanced by the advocates of the Church of Rome; and unless they admit its justice, they must abandon the ground on which they reject the doctrine of Transubstantiation. ‡ Indeed, Sir, you must know that the

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* *Letters to Dr. Horsley*, part ii. p. 148; or, *Works*, vol. xviii. p. 239.

† *Priestley, ibid.* p. 150, or p. 240.—‡ *Lingard's Tracts*, p. 311, &c.

unqualified accusation you bring against us, of having recourse to figurative interpretation, is altogether frivolous; adapted indeed to excite a prejudice against us in the minds of those who are not conversant with such subjects, and who are easily influenced by high-sounding and confident assertions, but unsupported by just principles of interpretation. You require not the authority of Bp. Marsh to convince you that "the Hebrew language is *highly* figurative, as well in the prophetical as in the poetical parts of the Old Testament, &c.; that the speeches and discourses of our Saviour are *not less* figurative: and, that numerous mistakes have been made by *a literal* application of what was *figuratively meant*." * You will, with him, commend the Church of England, for having, "with due attention to that *figurative style*, so *frequently* employed by our Saviour on other occasions, interpreted" his memorable words at the last Supper, "by *the rules of analogy, and by the dictates of common sense*." Do not then hold us up to the scorn or the indignation of your clergy, for exercising the same attention to the style of the sacred writers, and interpreting their words by the same rules and dictates.

You proceed, (p. 9, 10,) "Even inconclusive argumentation, as well as inaccurate language, is by some of their apostles, charged upon what they yet, however, vouchsafe to denominate 'the Word of God:' the opinions of reason are exalted beyond the affirmations of Scripture, and every one is invited to be *wise above What is written!*" This latter accusation you frequently prefer against us. We are said

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* *Marsh's Lectures*, No. xvi.

"to wrest the Scriptures to our own destruction; to explode tenets, merely because they are the deep things of God; to reject Scriptures, because they preach the doctrine of the atonement too plainly, to be endured by modern rationalists, &c. &c." Such general and unsubstantiated charges, can be met only by a positive denial; and, I hesitate not to assert that they are altogether groundless. I defy any one to prove that it is our practice to exalt reason above the affirmations of Scripture. By no one are we invited, if we were, I am persuaded we should not obey the invitation to be *wise above what is written*. The Bible, and the Bible alone, is the standard to which we appeal; and it is not on us that your censure (p. 10) falls, of making it "descend to play the part of a subordinate document," but on those who dare not trust it in the hands of the people, unaccompanied by a Church prayer-book and a Church catechism; and who, for the simple confession of faith required by Jesus Christ and his Apostles, substitute thirty-nine articles, some of them of a most perplexing and incomprehensible nature, established by an Act of Parliament. I adopt the common language of Unitarians when I say, Convince us that any tenet is authorized by the Bible, from that moment we receive it. Prove any doctrine to be a doctrine of Christ, emanating from that wisdom which was from above, and we take it for our own, and no power on earth shall wrest it from us. * They are not the doctrines of

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* "No Unitarian that I know, or have read of, did ever object to any part a divine revelation, because it was beyond his comprehension. Let me know but clearly, that God has signified his mind and will; and then let the subject be ever so unfathomable by me, I will receive and believe it; because no better reason can possibly be given for any thing, than that God hath said it."—*Lindsey's Exam. of Robinson's Plea, Pref.* p. xxiv.

Scripture that we reject on the ground of their being unreasonable, but the doctrines which are contained in Antiscriptural articles, creeds, and confessions. It is in these alone that we perceive any thing that requires "the prostration of the understanding:" the words of Christ and his Apostles appear to us, if "explained upon correct principles of interpretation," to be perfectly intelligible, and consonant with the dictates of right reason. Here again you take for granted, the very matter in debate between us. You assume that the doctrines which your Church deduces from the Scriptures, are indeed the doctrines they contain; and since we cannot receive these doctrines, both because they do not appear to us the doctrines of revelation, and are, in several instances, incomprehensible, you charge us with being wise above what is written, and with exalting reason above the word of God. To the Bible we appeal, and by the Bible we will stand: not attempting to make it "descend to play the part of a subordinate document, to be taken up or thrown aside at pleasure," nor wishing that it should "assimilate its hues to the arbitrary colourings of any system" of ours; but anxious to learn, desirous to receive, and resolved to maintain "through evil as well as good report," whatever it enjoins us to believe.

"Even inconclusive argumentation," you observe, "as well as inaccurate language, is, by some of their apostles, charged upon what they yet, however, vouchsafe to denominate 'the word of God.'" The boldest of our apostles, I am confident, will be found to charge no such imperfections on what they really consider to be the word of God; but limiting, as I have before remarked, the extent of inspiration, and that for reasons which will not be easily disproved, they hold themselves at liberty to judge of the

argumentation and the language of the sacred writers, when not under the immediate influence of inspiration, with the same freedom that they would use in the case of any other authors. I will not undertake to defend every expression that "some of our apostles" may have employed in reference to this subject; but the principle on which they have proceeded, may be fully justified by reason, and is not without the sanction of what you will, no doubt, allow to be high authority. Very distinguished writers of your own church, have admitted the principle, but have had the prudence to apply it in terms of greater caution. What says Bp. Burnet in his Exposition of the sixth Article? "When divine writers argue upon any point, we are always bound to believe the conclusions that their reasonings end in, as parts of divine revelation: But we are not bound to be able to make out, or even to assent to all the premises made use of by them in their whole extent; unless it appears plainly that they affirm the premises as expressly as they do the conclusions proved by them." What is this but an acknowledgment that the sacred writers sometimes argue inconclusively? Dr. Powel, formerly Master of St. John's College, observes that "the wisdom contained in the Epistles of Paul, was given him from above, and very probably the style and composition were his own."—Again, "of whatever kind the language be, it probably had no other source than the natural abilities of the writers. The form and character of St. Paul's Epistles we shall find to have been derived from the circumstances of his early life." And again, "It has been said that the Holy Spirit suggested not only the religious wisdom, but every sentence and word which the sacred writers delivered: this can never be proved. And could it be proved that the Holy Scriptures were thus dic-

tated, it does not appear that any important conclusions would be deducible from it. That which is important is also clear: whatever be thought of the colouring, the substance of these writings was from heaven."—*Sermons*, No. xv. The late Dr. Paley, whom you will not allow to have been of us, states it as a necessary caution, "that in reading the apostolic writings, we distinguish between their doctrines and their arguments. Their doctrines came to them by revelation, properly so called; yet, in propounding these doctrines, they were wont to illustrate, support, and enforce them by such analogies, arguments, and considerations, as their own thoughts suggested. The doctrine itself must be received; but is it necessary, in order to defend Christianity, to defend the propriety of every comparison, or the validity of every argument, which the apostle has brought into the discussion?"—*Evid. of Christianity*, vol. ii. p. 303.—We answer, certainly not: and these are the principles, and no other, that we avow. And on these very principles we say, in the language of one of those whom you sneeringly call "our apostles," "There is no reason to believe that the apostle (Paul) was inspired to write a certain number of Epistles, and no more, or that he was prompted by immediate divine suggestion to write every, or any one of the Epistles which are now extant: he puts in no claim to inspiration in his reasonings, in his illustrations, in his narratives of fact, in his typical and figurative arguments from the Old Testament, in his application of Scripture language, in his interpretation of the Sacred Writings, in his appropriation of Jewish prophecy. In all these cases, the apostle speaks and writes as any other person of similar abilities and information would in similar circumstances, with similar habits and prepossessions: and his writings are to be examined, discussed, and discriminated, like those of any other author; with the same

freedom and the same candour."—*Belsham's Epistles of Paul, &c.* Prel. Dis. sect. ii.

On this, as indeed on almost every other subject connected with Unitarianism, we have suffered much from the misconception of our adversaries, but more, I fear, from their misrepresentations. It must be owned and lamented that some of our most distinguished writers "have occasionally given to their opinions, which yet will bear the most rigid examination, a form that unnecessarily renders them obnoxious and repulsive;* but let that form be diligently and impartially scrutinized, and it will wear a more favourable appearance." Let the passages which are cited from Unitarian writers, be carefully examined, not as they are cited by their opponents, disjoined from their context, mutilated, curtailed, misinterpreted, paraphrased, and in every possible way distorted, but in the works to which they belong, and in their proper form and connexion; and that, which under the management of a Horsley or a Magee, is made to excite unqualified disapprobation, will be often regarded as free from blame, if not founded in truth; as consistent with a profound reverence for whatever bears the authority of the name of God, though at variance with what may be esteemed, by some, the doctrines of revelation. It is possible, by the skilful use of an obnoxious phrase in the writings of an adversary, to expose

* *Carpenter's Reply to Magee*, p. 286.—I must be permitted again to refer to this able work, which, notwithstanding the contempt in which it is held by the Archdeacon of Cleveland, as a "nauseating crambe recocta," contains a full and satisfactory vindication of Dr. Priestley and Mr. Belsham from the accusations which he has retailed from the calumniating Abp. of Dublin; and of which there is a delectable specimen in p. 41, note 2.

him to suspicion and to censure, by no means merited. When Unitarians are represented as charging upon the sacred writers "inconclusive argumentation," it is generally, and no doubt, intended to be understood, that they do this, in order to evade the consequences of that argumentation, and to get rid of unpalatable doctrines. But this is very far from being the fact. I am not aware that any doctrine, usually deemed essential, is rejected by us on this ground. If we at any time dispute the propriety of the application of the ancient prophecies, whether by Jesus himself or his disciples, we yet admit, without hesitation, that he was the promised Messiah; the Son of David, and the Son of God. Though we may not be able to see the legitimacy and the force of all the arguments adduced by Paul in his Epistles to the Romans and to the Galatians, we have no doubt as to the doctrines he labours to establish; we firmly believe that it was in the counsels of Divine Providence, from all eternity, to make the Gentiles partakers in the privileges of the Messiah's kingdom, and that justification was not to be obtained by the works of the law, but by faith in Christ. We receive all the doctrines advanced by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, although we may think that he has sometimes endeavoured to establish those doctrines by overstrained analogies, and upon mere Jewish principles. If we reject many opinions, which others embrace as scriptural, it is not because the sacred writers have endeavoured to prove them by "inconclusive argumentation," but because they do not appear to us to have maintained them at all.

Though the charges which I have thus endeavoured to repel, appear to be dealt out against Unitarian writers generally, they were, for the most part, probably, designed

to be levelled at one particular work, which is thought to be, and certainly is, in good repute amongst us. For, having gone through them, you observe, (page 10,) "I speak to those who understand what I say: nor am I aware that I have advanced a single iota of crimination, which I cannot specifically maintain by citations from what has been fantastically entitled the 'Improved Version of the New Testament,' if the occasion permitted me to go into the easy detail." I heartily wish the occasion had permitted it; as it would have afforded me a better opportunity of vindicating that calumniated work: and easy as the detail might have been, the confutation of any charges that might be brought against it, would be far easier. In your notes, you have in part supplied the deficiency in the Charge; and to these I will now attend. But first permit me to ask, in what respect the title is *fantastical?* Is the authorized English version so perfect, that whatever professes to be an improvement of it, must be pronounced fantastical? Why then, did the late Professor Symonds collect with so much pains, the numerous passages in that version which require to be amended? Why did the Venerable Primate of Ireland devote his great biblical learning, his talents, and industry, to the accomplishment of a New Translation? If, instead of 'An Attempt toward revising an English Translation of the Greek Scriptures,' he had intitled his excellent work, 'An Improved Version, &c.' I cannot think you would have condemned that title as fantastical. Much less, then, should this condemnation fall on the work of the Unitarian Editors, which is, in many respects, an improvement of the Primate's. I think I may assert, without justly exposing myself to the charge of presumption, that I am better acquainted with this Improved Version than yourself; who, as far as I can judge, know little or nothing of it, but what you have

collected from the pages of Laurence, Nares, Magee, and Rennel; and I hesitate not to pronounce it a real and a manifest improvement upon the authorized version. I am not blind to its faults; I am not unwilling to acknowledge that it is capable of emendation; I regret, that by following the Archbishop, it has often needlessly departed from the simplicity of the translation in common use: but, when I consider that it represents a much purer original text than king James's translators could have had before them; when I perceive in how many instances it has illustrated what they left in obscurity, how successfully it has endeavoured to remove the ambiguities, the solecisms, and the obsolete expressions, which every candid critic will own to be deformities in the authorized version, I boldly maintain, that the Editors are the just subjects, not of censure, but of praise. The title they have adopted, may appear to some not quite so modest as might have been desired, but no one has a right to call it *fantastical*.

I now turn to the accusations advanced against this version in your notes. "It sets out," you say, (p. 57,)" with a most dishonest title-page, professing to be 'on the plan of *the late Abp. Newcome*,' from whom it yet, in almost every page, widely deviates, by *a* Society for promoting Christian Knowledge! thus attempting to impose upon the unwary, the authority at once of a high Dignitary of the Established Church, and of *the* Venerable Society, which has now, for nearly a century and a half, been exclusively designated by that particular title." That the improved version deviates in almost every page from the Archbishop's, will be allowed; but, that it widely deviates from it, is an assertion which you are not authorized to make: and I am inclined to hope, that you would not have made it, had you, instead of

trusting to representations of others, compared for yourself the two versions, or even read that Review, by a Unitarian writer, to the testimony of which you refer. Dr. Carpenter, whom you rightly name as the author of that Review, has indeed furnished Dr. Nares with the fact, which you might otherwise not have known, that in the first edition of the Improved Version, there were many deviations from Newcome's translation; but he has been far from warranting you to assert, that these deviations were generally of any importance. When censuring the Editors of the Improved Version, for using the name of the Archbishop, in order to mislead the unwary, you ought to have been particularly careful not to expose yourself to a similar censure, by a disingenuous use of the name of a Unitarian review. The note upon the note, in page 57, is certainly calculated, whatever may have been its design, to mislead your readers, by making them believe that the whole of your assertion is supported by the authority of Dr. Carpenter. I will endeavour to disabuse them, by citing his words on this subject. "We find," says Dr. C. "from the Introduction, § i." (*Month. Rep.* iv. p. 216,) "that the committee assumed as a principle, 'That no alteration should be made in the Primate's translation, but where it appeared to be necessary to the correction of error, or inaccuracy in the text, the language, the construction, or the sense.' We do not know whether our readers will feel any surprise, when we inform them, that the number of the alterations actually made, amounts to about seven hundred and fifty. Many of these are in cases of frequent occurrence, such as *teacher* for *master*, N.; *Hosanna* for *Save now*, N. &c. A large proportion of the alterations arise from employing Newcome's marginal rendering, or one proposed in his notes, instead of that in his text; and several from the

changes made in Griesbach's second edition. At a random calculation, these may reduce the number to about four hundred independent alterations. Our readers will not expect that we should examine the whole of these separately. In our estimation, the Editors have, in general, been very successful in improving upon their basis; and we cannot therefore hesitate in saying, that the Improved Version is, by far, the most faithful and intelligible version of the Christian Scriptures, in at least the English language. In some very important points, the Editors have made improvements, which will remove the difficulties unnecessarily felt by the unlearned reader; and in numerous other instances, by apparently small, but, in reality, valuable alterations, they have decidedly improved their basis, in 'the language, construction, or sense.'" "The Editors express their intention of noticing, in every instance, the rendering of Newcome where they leave it. In almost all cases they have done so, but in some few cases they have left it uncertain what is Newcome's rendering, or even have altogether omitted to state it." He then specifies those passages, which amount to about sixty, and adds, "In most of these instances, the variation is completely unimportant; but in some, as is obvious to the reader, the changes should have been very carefully noticed. No one can suppose that the omission arose from any want of fidelity, or of respect to Newcome's opinion, who observes the minuteness with which variations are noticed, and the numerous instances in which a preference is given to his own renderings, where yet an alteration is made in the text." Such is the testimony of the Unitarian reviewer, to which you appeal in support of your charge of dishonesty, on the part of the Editors of the Improved Version. Let any truly candid reader determine how far it bears you out in that charge.

The reviewer's attention has been called to this subject again, by the use, I should rather say the abuse, of this same passage by Abp. Magee, whom chiefly, I believe you have followed. In his calm and masterly answer to that mitred calumniator, Dr. Carpenter thus more decidedly bears his testimony to the honesty of the Editors, so wrongfully denied under the cover of his name. "That the Improved Version really has Newcome's translation as its basis, is clear from the following *facts:* Upon an average, there are not two variations from it in a page. These, in nineteen cases out of twenty, consist of alterations in single words, such as *Wealth* for *Mammon*, *propose* for *show*, *is* for *flourisheth*, *departure* for *departing*, *hardness* for *blindness*, &c. There are not twenty verses in the whole work, in which the variations from the Primate's version have any close connection with peculiarities of theological sentiment. Many of the alterations are those proposed by Newcome himself. I go farther, and say, that the general spirit and character of the translation is decidedly Newcome's. Those who have dwelt solely on the doctrinal variations from the Primate's version, till they have magnified them ten-fold to their own imaginations, will not be disposed to admit this last position; but those preceding they cannot deny; at least they cannot refute them; and upon them I found it."—*Carpenter's Reply to Magee, &c.* p. 306.

The other act of dishonesty with which the Improved Version is charged with setting out, is its "professing to be by *a* Society for promoting Christian Knowledge." This, after Magee, you deem "an attempt to impose upon the unwary the authority of *the* Venerable Society, &c." Is the definite article of such mighty efficacy in the Greek language,

as by its presence or its absence in given circumstances, to prove the Deity of Christ; and is it of such insignificance in English, as not to be distinguishable from the indefinite? Are the terms *a society* and *the society* equivalent? If they be, as your accusation of the Improved Version seems to suppose, on what ground has Bp. Magee, Dr. Moysey, and others, so severely censured the Editors of the Improved Version, as amongst their numerous artifices, "making free with the *article*, substituting *a* Son for *the* Son of God, whenever they find it convenient to do so." *Moysey's Bampton Lectures*, p. 174.—Dr. Magee, citing some of the important, unacknowledged departures from Newcome's version, instances Luke i. 32.—"In verse 32 also," he observes, "we find Newcome use the definite article, 'He shall be great, and shall be called THE Son of the Most High,' and in this, likewise, the *followers* of Newcome *desert* him, rendering 'A Son of the Most High,' and giving no notice whatever of the departure."* Is, then, the difference between *a son* and *the son*, so important and manifest; and could any one fail to perceive that *a Society* was not *the Society*? Had the Editors designed to impose upon the unwary, why not say at once, *the Society*? But they did not mean to impose; and they have truly said that the work was pub-

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* "Is it not singular," asks Dr. Carpenter, (*Reply, &c.* p. 315,) "that while holding up to public view, the errors of others, and attributing to them an *intention* which implies *criminality of the deepest die*, the Bishop should himself interpolate an article not to be found in the passage he quotes? Yet so it is. The Improved Version has it, 'He shall be great, and shall be called Son of the Most High.' When the Bishop writes a Commentary on 1 Cor. xiii., in order to justify himself, he must prove, (which he may do in the same way that he *proves* many other things,) that Charity 'hopeth all things' and 'believeth all things,' *which are injurious to an obnoxious sect, or an obnoxious individual.*"

lished by *a* Society for promoting Christian Knowledge; a Society *formed* for that purpose above thirty years ago. I agree, indeed, with Dr. Carpenter, that the omission of the word *Unitarian*, in the title-page of the first edition, was injudicious. The title "did not say all, but all that it said was true. As to its leading any to suppose that it had its origin in the Bartlett's Buildings' Society, that is utterly out of the question. Let it be proved that it did mislead any one, and we will then allow that it might: but, even then, we will not allow that it was intended to do so."

Further, you censure the Improved Version for omitting passages without any authority. You had unquestionably this work in view, when, in your Charge, you told your clergy, (p. 9,) that "Unitarians can *obliterate*," &c. And, in page 54, you observe, "As a specimen of no moderate *garbling*, I may refer to the expulsion of nearly the first two chapters both of Matthew and Luke, from the canon of the New Testament." And you go on to state, what the Editors of the Improved Version have themselves candidly told their readers, that these passages are found in all MSS. and in all ancient versions. But these passages, though their authenticity is disputed, are not expelled. They are found in the Improved Version, nearly word for word as they appear in the version of the Primate. They are indeed printed in Italics, "as an intimation," say the Editors, "that they are of doubtful authority." The grounds on which they call in question their authority, are fairly stated, and the reader, who is further assisted by copious references to writers on both sides of the subject, has it in his power to examine them. Should he deem these grounds invalid, he has the passages still. His copy of the New Testament is

not mutilated! What else than what they have done, could the Editors, as honourable men, do. They have decidedly expressed and marked their opinion of the authenticity of three long passages; but they have not garbled or mutilated the Sacred Volume. If in any case they have expunged, it has been in strict conformity with the original text, which they profess to follow, and which will, no doubt be a standard text, notwithstanding the opposition of Nolan, or even of Laurence. Although no Unitarian *garbling*, supposing the Editors had been guilty of it, could be justified by any garbling on the part of orthodox believers, yet it might perhaps, certainly it should, abate some of the asperity with which the former are treated, if their adversaries would recollect that some of the members of the Established Church, even learned dignitaries, have rendered themselves obnoxious to the same charge. It surely escaped your recollection, when you so severely censured the "boldness that garbles" Scripture, that Dr. Durell, Principal of Hertford College, Oxford, &c. was for striking out from the Canon of the Jewish Scriptures, the whole book of Canticles; and that Dr. Stock, the late Bishop of Killala, condemned a long passage in the book of Job, as spurious; both of them without the slightest authority from MSS., versions, or any other external evidence. Whether Dr. Durell, had he published an Improved Version of the Old Testament, would have expunged the book of Canticles, or printed it in italics, I cannot pretend to say; but Dr. Stock has, in his version of Job, separated the passage, the authenticity of which he denies, from the rest of the chapter in which it occurs; and very unceremoniously, and, as must appear to you, very irreverently, stigmatizes it "as a superfetation, that might well have been spared." Not an

atom of evidence does either of these learned men attempt to offer against the canonical authority of these passages: they ground their rejection of them on internal evidence alone. The Editors of the Improved Version, though they cannot cite any MSS. or Versions, have some historical testimony against the first two chapters of Matthew to produce; but they also depend chiefly upon internal marks of spuriousness.*

In the note to which I am now referring, you seem to hint, that the Editors have not been sparing of conjectural criticism. From your own examination of the Improved Version, no suspicion of this could have occurred to you: the style of the concluding part of your note betrays your authority, which is no other than Dr. Laurence himself. Permit me, then, to bring to your notice the reply, made by one of the Editors of that Version, to the charge advanced by this learned writer:—"Gentlemen," he observes, "would save themselves and their readers some trouble, and many mistakes, though perhaps it might not so well answer their purpose, if they would have the goodness to look into the Improved Version, before they favour the world with their animadversions upon it. For want of attention to this equitable and useful rule, the learned Dr. Laurence, of the University of Oxford, in his "Critical

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* This liberty has indeed been taken by the orthodox both of ancient and modern times. Several books of the New Testament, now esteemed canonical, were, it is well known, not universally received by the early Christians; and one of these, the Epistle of James, has been in later times treated with very little respect. Luther called it an Epistle of Straw, "*Epistola Straminea*;" and others, as *Althamerus*, and the *Magdeburgh Centuriators* have charged the author with false doctrine.—Vide *Wetstenii Test. Gr.* tom. ii. p. 658.

Reflections" upon what he calls 'The Unitarian Version of the New Testament,' has fallen into a most egregious error; and, in the fervour of his zeal to correct the supposed misrepresentations of others, he becomes guilty of the most gross and palpable misrepresentation himself. Almost ten pages of Dr. Laurence's Introductory Remarks are occupied in severe and unsparing animadversions upon the Editors of the Improved Version, for having altered the text by critical conjecture, in two very important passages, John i. 1, and Rom. ix. 5, and adapted it to their own theological opinions, without the authority of any one manuscript or version, or of any one ancient ecclesiastical writer; and in direct contradiction to the judgment of Michaelis, to whose celebrated work they appeal, and whose rules of criticism they profess to adopt. And, after having quoted several passages from that eminent critic, in which he expresses the strongest disapprobation of admitting conjectural criticism into the text of the New Testament, Dr. Laurence concludes with the following sarcastic remark:—'As it is impossible to expose their reasoning more strongly than the critic himself has done, to whom they appeal for support, and that even in the very chapter which they quote, I shall add nothing more upon the subject, but leave them to enjoy as they can, the testimony of Michaelis.' Courteous reader! would you believe it? *The Editors have not, in a single instance, admitted conjectural criticism into the text.* They entered their protest against it in their Introductory Remarks: (see p. xvii.) they appealed to Michaelis, as themselves cordially adopting his sentiments upon the subject; nor have they ever infringed upon their rule and his, even 'where very plausible conjectures, of no inconsiderable importance, have been suggested by men of great learning and sagacity, which, to say the least, merit very attentive consi-

deration. See particularly John i. 1; vi. 4; Rom. ix. 5.' So it is that the Editors of the Improved Version are treated. Gentlemen, men of learning and eminence, whose word with the multitude passes for law, without taking the trouble to examine, do not scruple to hazard assertions which are erroneous in the extreme, and allege charges which are utterly unfounded, but which are too generally believed."—*Belsham's Reply to Moysey*, p. 74, &c.*

"With respect to punctuation," you observe, (p. 55,) "the Editors of the 'Improved Version,' by substituting in Rom. ix. 5, a full point for the comma, after σαρκα, and explaining the sequel as a devout apostrophe, (*'God be blessed for ever,'*) endeavour, with Enjedin and other Socinians,† to silence this signal testimony to the Deity of the Messiah." I would again ask, Do not the canons of legitimate criticism allow of a change in the punctuation of the received text? Even with the aid of Middleton, you cannot deny this. The question, therefore, is, Whether the Editors have, in this instance, exercised a sound judgment, and duly attended to the style of their author, the exigence of the place, and other just principles of criticism, and interpretation? The text

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* "It is not a singular case," says Bp. Marsh, "that when *one* objector has made a mistake, others follow him, without reading the book on which he animadverts."—*Lectures*, part vi. p. 49.

† It is worthy of remark, in reference to a subject which occurs in my first letter, that this Socinian interpretation, as it is here called, is that adopted by Mr. Locke, who thus paraphrases the latter part of this verse: "And of them, as to his fleshly extraction, Christ is come, he who is over all, God be blessed for ever, Amen." Though Mr. Locke has not introduced a full point, it is evident that he considered the last clause as a doxology, not to Christ, but to the Father.

of Griesbach, which they profess to follow, shows here a variety of opinion as to the punctuation, and leaves them at full liberty to adopt the method they most approve. And the lower margin contains the authority of some MSS. and ancient Fathers for that which they have chosen. In their note, the Editors candidly state their departure from Newcome, and the reasons which induce them to point the passage as they have done. As to the signal testimony borne by this passage to the Deity of the Messiah, it is certain that no such testimony was originally gathered from it; for, as the Editors of the Improved Version incontrovertibly assert "the early Christian writers do not apply the doxology to Christ; but pronounce it rashness and impiety to say that Christ was God over all."

1. Misled by one of your oracles (Dr. Nares) on the subject of the Improved Version, you censure the Editors for what proves to be too close an adherence to the Primate; for leaving whom, at other times, they incur your displeasure. "So again," you observe, (p. 56.) "as to the decisive compellation of Thomas to his Saviour, 'My Lord and my God,' (John xx. 28,) we are to conceive it only an irreverent expression of surprise! Beza more truly says, *Verba sunt non tantum admirantis Thomæ, ut hunc locum eludebant Nestoriani, sed ipsum illum Jesum ut verum Deum ac Dominum compellantis.* And yet the Editors of the 'Improved Version' refer to Beza!" It is Abp. Newcome who refers to Beza; and the head and front of the offending of the Editors, is their having too implicitly followed their guide. The remark is not their own. It is wholly and literally copied from the Archbishop's Version; and his name is affixed to it. Not referring either to the Improved Version, or to that of the Primate, but relying on Dr. Nares, no wonder that you were deceived; for he has most

disingenuously misrepresented the matter. Is it fair and honourable thus to repeat serious charges against authors, without being at the pains to examine their works, and to ascertain whether they are well founded? But Unitarians seem to be considered as out of the protection of the usual laws of controversy; and given over to be silenced and destroyed by any means, however foul.

There is another censure passed on the Improved Version, in the last note upon the Charge, (p. 65,) which, however trifling it may appear, I cannot suffer to pass without notice. Having cited, at the conclusion of your Charge, Tit. ii. 13, 14, "Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of our Great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ," you observe in the note, "Here, however, the 'Improved Version' inserts a comma after θεου, and repeats the particle 'of' before σωτηρος; though, like the translation which underwent Dr. Twells' reprobating criticism, in Pet. ii. 20, (where κυριος only, not θεος, is concerned,) they omit both. But the single Various Reading of Griesbach omits the και, and thus makes the identity of Person, if possible, still stronger." In vindication of the Improved Version, it may be observed, that in placing the comma after θεου, it follows the common English Version; * and for repeating the particle 'of,' before σωτηρος, it has the authority of that "high Dignitary of the Established Church," whose excellent translation it takes for its basis. And, in omitting both in 2 Pet. ii. 20, it agrees again with the Authorized Version, and with that of the Archbishop; only, with the latter, instead of THE *Lord*, reading OUR *Lord*. While aiming a blow therefore, at the Improved Version, you have smitten both

* In some editions it is so pointed.

that which is held in reverence by your own Church; and that which proceeded from one of its most eminent members.

" Pereunt Hypanisque Dymasque
Confixi a sociis."

As to the Various Reading of Griesbach, which has called forth from you the echo of Nares's remark, " Griesbach's only various reading is the omission of *και*, which would make the case stronger," * it is supported by no authority; for the testimony of Facundus carries little weight, and every biblical scholar knows, that the Æthiopic translator, the only other witness, omits the conjunction, whenever he regards it as exegetical. I grant that he so understood this passage.

I find no other specific charge against the Improved Version; but there is a short note somewhat connected with it, which I cannot suffer to pass unnoticed. It proves that you do not always treat your own oracles with due respect; but that you can misrepresent your friends, while accumulating your misrepresentations of those whom you so bitterly oppose. In page 62, heaping your sarcasms upon the modern Unitarian interpretation of the Logos, in the 1st chapter of John, according to which you say, " an attribute" (wisdom) "was *μονογενης*, the only-begotten; or, to adopt the Improved Version, the *dearly-beloved*," &c. you add in a note on this word, " Used, as Mr. Belsham states, for *αγαπητος*, which he vouchsafes to inform us, does not once occur in the New Testament! whereas, it occurs, at least, six times! *(Nares.)*"—But Nares, from whom you profess to derive this note, is not guilty of the blunder here palmed

* *Remarks on the Improved Version*, p. 55.

upon him. He does not assert that a word occurs in the New Testament *at least six times*, when a glance upon the column of his Schmidius would show him that it occurred *at least* SIXTY. Nares's remark is, "It is not true that the word αγαπητος does not occur *in the writings of St. John*. It occurs *in these writings* at least six times." But you, perhaps, served him right to misrepresent him; for he has in this very passage, misrepresented Mr. Belsham, and again misled you. Mr. B. vouchsafes no such information as that which, on the supposed authority of Dr. Nares, you ascribe to him.* The passage on which Dr. Nares animadverts, is in the *Calm Inquiry*, p. 166, 2d edit. and is as follows:—"It (the term μονογενης) is often metonymically used to express 'dearly beloved.' See Heb. xi. 17. And the same word, in the original Hebrew, which by the LXX. is rendered μονογενης, 'only-begotten,' is, in other passages, translated αγαπητος, 'beloved.' Jer. vi. 26; Amos, viii. 10. Hence, it is probable, that as the word αγαπητος, 'beloved,' *does not occur in John as a title of Christ*, this writer uses the word μονογενης, 'only-begotten,' instead of it, and where the other Evangelists would use 'beloved.'" Now, Sir, does Mr. Belsham vouchsafe to inform us, that αγαπητος does not once occur in the New Testament; though you have vouchsafed to inform

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* It is somewhat remarkable, that the Rev. Heneage Horsley, Prebendary of St. Asaph, was misled in the very same manner. Trusting to the same article, in the British Critic, for January, 1812, he told the world that Mr. Belsham "had boldly affirmed that αγαπητος does not occur in St. John."—See *the last edition of Bp. Horsley's Tracts*, p. 597; and *Mr. Belsham's Reply to the Rev. H. Horsley*, &c. p. 94, &c.—The Prebendary, however, took care not to add to the original blunder, by saying that Mr. B. denied that the term occurred in the New Testament: that was reserved for the Archdeacon of Cleveland!

us that this word, which occurs there above sixty times, occurs at least six? But thus it is that the writings of Unitarians are misquoted and misrepresented, and then on the strength of their adversaries' blunders or artifices, they are branded as sciolists, and shallow theological critics, and denied the possession of common sense, common honesty, or the learning of school-boys! Such are the methods employed to beat down and silence Unitarians, adopted and pursued by members of your Church of every grade, from an Archbishop of Dublin to a Vicar Choral of York Minster. But this mode of warfare against us, will not finally succeed: it may injure us for a season, but it cannot discomfit us. Prejudice may, by these "arts," not of "evasion," but of hostility, be kept alive and active; but when it is discovered, as it must be ere long, that such arts have been practised against us, minds of a liberal and honourable character, will be the more disposed to do justice to our principles and ourselves.

Though you have advanced no other specific charge against the Improved Version, there is one of a general nature, which, if well founded, would stamp upon it merited infamy. "Those," you say, (p. 57,) "who wish for farther evidence of the accumulated tricks exemplified in the 'Improved Version,' may find them ὅλῳ τῷ θυλακι in Magee's, Laurence's, Nares', and Rennell's admirable strictures, written expressly on that subject." True, Sir, your readers will find a "sack full" of "accumulated tricks," in the possession of every one of those to whom you refer them, but they are all their own; not one of them ever was the property of the Editors of the Improved Version. I will confidently refer our readers (if indeed I should have the good fortune to reckon among my readers any

who have been yours also) to that Version itself; and, though they may find some mistakes, and many things in the text, and more in the notes, of which they may disapprove, I will venture to say, they will not find a single trick; any thing which can justify the suspicion of disingenuousness or artifice. I may be allowed again to say, that I am better acquainted with the Improved Version than you, to whom I suspect it is known only through the medium of the authorities you have cited; and I affirm without hesitation, that, though I am far from regarding it as a faultless work, either as to the translation, or the interpretation of many important passages, it is conducted throughout, in a fair and honourable manner, under the manifest and powerful influence of a sincere and supreme love of truth.* I have the happiness also to be acquainted with the excellent person who is well known to have been principally concerned in preparing and publishing it, and who does not, as he needs not, shrink from the responsibility of the chief and efficient Editor; and I have no hesitation in asserting, that nothing ever proceeded from him,

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* Next to the Improved Version itself, they who wish to form a true judgment of the representation which have been made of it by Abp. Magee and others, will do well to consult the able work of Dr. Carpenter, intitled *An Examination of the Charges made against Unitarians, &c. &c. by the Right Rev. Dr. Magee, &c.* a work, which though almost wholly occupied in detecting and refuting the most provoking calumnies that were ever uttered against Unitarian writers and their doctrine, is no less distinguished for its urbanity, mildness, and truly Christian spirit, than for the successful accomplishment of its purpose. If our Lord's maxim be still applicable to the preachers of his gospel, "By their fruits ye shall know them," no impartial judge can be at a loss to determine which of the two, the overbearing, defaming prelate, or the gentle, candid, dissenting pastor, has the best claims to be regarded as a true disciple of Christ.

on which the slightest suspicion of unfairness can, for a moment, rest. Even the first witness to whom you appeal, Abp. Magee, who, in his treatment of Mr. Belsham, "appears" as Dr. Carpenter observes, "to be influenced by a spirit of personal revenge, and of intolerant bigotry, which would have better suited the age, when persecution wielded different, but not more injurious weapons," even he allows him the praise of *amiable and virtuous feeling*, and declares that he believes him to be *incapable of duplicity*. But this praise ought not to be allowed to him, for he deserves it not, if he can be convicted of "accumulated tricks;" especially when occupied in presenting to the world, what he professes to be a faithful version of those sacred writings, which contain the revealed will of God, and denounce the most awful punishment against all who practise the "hidden things of dishonesty." If you had not been content with perusing the writers you have here named, but had fairly and impartially compared the work they censure, with the allegations they bring against it, I am persuaded neither your other charges, nor this most severe and sweeping censure would have proceeded from your pen.

I come now to the last crimination in your Charge, that requires particular notice. In page 11, you say, "Among the principal grounds of the Creed, or No-Creed, professed by Socinians, may be ranked (as it has been remarked) the accordance of its dogmas with philosophical prejudices. By 'philosophical prejudices' are meant the prejudices of men of taste and science on the subject of religion. Accustomed to revel in the riches of the intellect, and the pleasures created by the magic of genius, they feel a strange and adverse descent, when they are summoned to receive the peculiar disclosures of the Christian Revelation."

These disclosures, in the following declamatory paragraph, you assume to be the doctrines maintained by the established church of this country, and other sects usually denominated orthodox.—"The grounds of a creed," I should imagine, would be generally understood to denote the foundation on which it professes to be built; the principles contained, or supposed by those who frame the creed, to be contained, in the Scriptures. But if I am not greatly mistaken, you confound these with the motives by which some at least, you cannot mean to say all, who maintain that creed, have been induced to adopt it, after it has been framed. If you do indeed intend to say that the creed of Unitarians has been framed on 'philosophical prejudices,' by men of taste and science, I deny the fact, and without any hesitation assert, that it was the creed of the illiterate, though inspired apostles of our Lord; and that in all succeeding ages it has been held, with various modifications and corruptions indeed, by those who have not generally ranked amongst the wise and learned. If you mean that the continued existence of this creed is owing to the countenance it receives from men of taste and science, I deny that also to be the fact; and I would invite you to lay aside all unmeaning declamation, and to produce some sufficient proof of what you assert; and, at the same time, to reconcile this assertion with your censure of Unitarianism as a school of sciolism. If you mean to say that men of taste and science, in general, are prejudiced against religion, and betake themselves to Unitarianism, to shroud themselves from the imputation of infidelity, permit me to ask, how are you borne out by experience? Can it be denied that such persons as those of whom you speak, in general, either openly disregard all religion, or without troubling themselves to inquire upon the subject, profess, without indeed

paying much, if any, respect to its ordinances, to be members of the church, established in the country in which they may happen to live? Besides, how can you consistently say that such men would avoid the imputation of infidelity; or that "under the veil of Socinianism, their hardihood of speculation and audacity of conjecture, may mask themselves from universal reprobation?" Have you not yourself virtually denied (p. 26) that there is any difference between those whom you call Socinians and Unbelievers; between those who reject Christian Doctrines *in omnibus*, and those who reject them *in toto*? And have you not done all in your power to expose to "universal reprobation," the creed, or the no-creed of Unitarians and all who maintain it? And a great service would you be rendering to religion and virtue by so doing, if your calumnious representation of Unitarianism could be substantiated; if you could prove, as readily as you can assert, that it "offers a friendly veil to hardihood of speculation and audacity of conjecture;" that it either is itself, (for I am not certain that I clearly comprehend your meaning,) or that it willingly employs "a menstruum which easily lowers the terms of Scripture, and readily dissolves every plain but obnoxious precept;" that "it conciliates not only the Pyrrhonist, but the profligate, both of whom, with a dethroned Christ, and a despoiled and degraded Christianity," (*i. e.* as you undoubtedly mean to be understood, professing Unitarianism) "may affect to be Christians, and find little or nothing in their religion to condemn them."

It is impossible for any conscientious Unitarian, who experiences the animating and the purifying influences of his faith, to read this passage without feelings of indignation. I hesitate not to avow that such are my feelings;

but they are mingled with sentiments of deep regret, that one, from whose extensive learning, correct taste, enlightened understanding, and general urbanity of manners, every thing fair, and candid, and honourable, might have been justly expected, should thus violate truth and charity, in the service of a party, and afford the sanction of his authority to the revilings and the calumnies of ignorance and bigotry.

You will, without doubt, contend that in drawing this truly frightful picture of Unitarianism, you are warranted by the concessions of some of its most distinguished advocates. You have, in fact, in the passage on which I am now animadverting, pressed Dr. Priestley himself into the unholy and ungrateful service of confirming your misrepresentations, and of passing the sentence of condemnation on the principles he laboured to establish. "Here, then," you say, (p. 12,) *i. e.* when the disputers of this world reject the gospel as foolishness, yet are anxious not to be reputed infidels, "Socinianism steps in to offer her friendly veil; under which, hardihood of speculation and audacity of conjecture, may mask themselves from universal reprobation. So shrouded—to use the language of One who drew from the life, and whose accuracy in this instance cannot be suspected—the new proselyte may attain (if he does not, already, possess) that 'cool unbiassed temper of mind, *in consequence of becoming more indifferent to religion in general*, and to all the modes and doctrines of it, which is necessary in order to judge truly concerning particular tenets in religion!'"

It is much to be regretted, that while allowing the praise of accuracy to Dr. Priestley, because it suited your

purpose, you should have neglected that virtue yourself. The words which you mark as a citation from him, and by which you endeavour to support your severe censure of Unitarianism, are not his. I will *accurately* cite the passage which you have misrepresented. It is this: "Besides, it cannot be denied, that many of them, who judge so truly concerning particular tenets in religion, have attained to that cool, unbiassed temper of mind, in consequence of becoming more indifferent to religion in general, and to all the modes and doctrines of it. Though, therefore, they are in a more favourable situation for distinguishing between truth and falsehood, they are not likely to acquire a *zeal* for what they conceive to be the truth." (*Discourses on Various Subjects*, p. 95.)—Now, let the reader compare this extract, which I have accurately given, with the passage which I have as accurately transcribed from your Charge, and say whether you have indeed, as you profess to have done, "used the language of one who drew from the life?" Where are the words, which, by the distinction of inverted commas, you designed to be taken as the words of Dr. Priestley? Where has he asserted, that indifference to religion in general is "necessary, in order to judge truly concerning particular tenets in religion?" The term *necessary*, which is of the utmost importance in this passage, is not to be found in the original; nor is the idea it conveys, expressed there. In the sentence which you profess to quote, Dr. Priestley barely states the fact, that many speculative Unitarians have attained to a cool and unbiassed temper of mind, in consequence of becoming more indifferent to religion in general. In the next, which you have not quoted, he allows, indeed, that they are thus placed in a situation more favourable for distinguishing between truth and falsehood; but he does not even hint at this situation as being necessary for this

purpose; nor does he afford you the slightest ground for the sarcastic exclamation in your note, (p. 61,) "Alas! what must that religion be, to which the best introduction is, to have no religion at all!" Dr. Priestley's object, in the passage from which you have so unfairly cited, was to state a fact, and to assign what he conceived to be the cause of it. The fact is, that when he published the Discourse, in the preface to which that passage occurs, there were many who professed Unitarian opinions, but felt little zeal for their support, and were therefore easily induced to desert the religious societies to which they nominally belonged. The cause of this he conceived to be, that their religion was only speculative; that their indifference to religion in general, and to all the modes and doctrines of it, had produced in them so cool and unbiassed a temper, that they could readily distinguish between true and false doctrine; but, at the same time, prevented the just and desirable effect of truth on their affections and their lives. "Consequently," as he goes on to observe, "when they are satisfied with respect to any controverted question, concerning which they may have had the curiosity to make some inquiry, they presently dismiss the subject from their thoughts; and thus, never reading and thinking about it, except when it is casually mentioned, they are not in the way of being interested in it, and cannot be expected to make any great sacrifices to it." Very far indeed is Dr. Priestley from asserting, that such an indifference is essential to the reception of Unitarianism, or from approving of it. On the contrary, he laments that it should, in any instance, be found amongst those who call themselves Unitarians; and it is the object of the Discourse, to which these remarks are prefixed, to recommend the adoption of such measures in Unitarian societies, as should excite and cherish a different spirit, and render all the

members of such societies, zealous and practical Christians. He proposes that the ends which the apostles had in view, in forming Christian societies, should still be pursued. "They," he observes, "chiefly respected the ultimate and proper object of Christianity, which was the forming of good men, men fearing God, and conscientiously discharging the moral duties of life, as preparatory to that immortal state, which it was the great object of Christianity fully to reveal to us. Without this, they considered a man to be as effectually unqualified for being a member of a Christian society, as if he had been an unbeliever; because his nominal belief of Christianity had no proper influence on his behaviour in life. All Christians ought to be persons whose *light should shine before men, that others may see their good works.* They ought to *provoke to love and to good works, and not suffer sin in each other*; making converts to Christianity by their lives, no less than by their doctrine and arguments." Now Sir, is this a menstruum which can readily dissolve every plain but obnoxious precept? In such a religion, is there little or nothing to condemn the Pyrrhonist and the profligate?

It is true that Dr. Priestley does admit, as you observe, (p. 61,) that the connexion between the belief of the mere humanity of Christ (or, to use his own words) "between the simple truth that Christ was not the supreme God himself," and a Christian life, is very slight. And are you prepared to say that such is not the case with respect to any other doctrine,—that of the Deity of Christ, for instance, of Original Sin, or of the Atonement? May not these be taken up merely as matters of speculation? No doctrine whatever, so embraced, little attended to, and not carefully applied to some practical end, however pure and orthodox

it may be esteemed, will have any other than a very slight connexion with a Christian life. I have no doubt, Sir, that your knowledge of mankind will enable you to apply this maxim of Dr. Priestley, which you appear to cite as unfavourable to Unitarianism, to the doctrines of your own Church, and of every other religious sect.

That indifference to religion in general is more favourable than a zealous attachment to some particular form of religion to the perception of speculative religious truth, (which is all that Dr. Priestley means to assert,) is a position which will not be questioned by those who have any knowledge of the human mind, or any experience of human life. "There is no person," it has been well observed, "who, were he to choose one to whom he would convey instruction on any point, would not choose one who knew nothing of the point, rather than one whose ideas and opinions lie against it. Were he, for instance, to choose one whom he would instruct in the true system of the world, according to the modern discoveries, he would sooner choose one who was a stranger to philosophy, than one who had deeply imbibed a false philosophy, and was skilled in all the methods of defending it. The former would have nothing to do but to learn and improve: the latter, on the contrary, would have a great deal to unlearn, and it would be necessary to empty and to alter his whole mind before he could be made a proper subject for instruction, or a proper receptacle for truth." * This remark, the justice of which must be universally admitted, is equally applicable to subjects of religious inquiry. No one can feel deeply interested

* *Price's Sermons on various Subjects*, p. 8.

about religion, without attaching himself to one of the numerous parties, into which the religious world is divided: and partisans are, in general, very ill qualified to distinguish between truth and error. On the principle of Dr. Priestley's maxim, I am fully persuaded you would act. Were you desirous of making converts from the Roman Catholic Church, to what class of its members would you direct your labours? To the zealous or to the indifferent? Could you hope for success in a college of Jesuits—or even among the labouring and conscientious parish priests? Would you not rather apply yourself to those whose education you had reason to believe had been such as to create in them no decided prejudices, to form in them no strong religious habits; whose indifference to religion in general, would insure that cool and unbiassed temper of mind, which would be favourable to a patient hearing, and an impartial investigation of the arguments you had to propose? Among these, if they were men of good sense, you might make converts to the Protestant faith; while the pious devotee, the sole object of whose life was to please God, and to work out his salvation, in the way prescribed to him by his spiritual guides, would turn a deaf ear to you, "charm you never so wisely."—Would you bring any within the pale of the National Church, from the numerous sects of Protestants who dissent from it, to whom would you propose your arguments in favour of episcopacy? To those who had the reputation of being rigid Dissenters, who from education, long-cherished habits, connexions in life, or station in their respective religious societies, were strongly attached to the principles and the discipline of non-conformity; or to those, nominally, indeed, Dissenters, who discovered little or no acquaintance with the grounds of dissent, and little attachment to their party;

whose general conduct betrayed a love of the world, and an indifference to religion? From such only could you reasonably expect to gain converts—Men cannot form a judgment on points to which they will pay no attention. And what attention could you expect from a bigoted Catholic, or a rigid Dissenter? They would most probably treat your arguments, as High-Churchmen treat those of Dissenters and Unitarians: they would not listen to them. They would not read Church of England divinity, as you will not read Dissenting divinity. But Catholics and Dissenters, who had little or no attachment to religion in general, or to any of its forms, might be persuaded to attend to you, and attending, might be convinced; and from being, nominally, Catholics and Dissenters, might become Churchmen.

This incontrovertible maxim is perfectly consistent with that which our blessed Lord has sanctioned, in quoting which, as your manner is, you have widely departed from his words, which are not "He that doeth my will,"—but "If any man will do His will (*i. e.* the will of my Father) he shall know of the doctrine, &c." It is one thing to judge of the divine origin and authority of a doctrine, taught by one who lays claim to the character of a prophet, at the time of its delivery; and another and a very different thing, to examine which of many conflicting schemes, all pretending to be that very doctrine, bears the most decisive resemblance to the original. It is one thing to embrace a system of religious truth, the open avowal of which leads to obloquy, persecution, the loss of worldly substance, if not of life itself; another and a very different thing to decide amidst contending sects, all professing to maintain that truth, when the decision is attended with no personal

danger or inconvenience. In the one case, an ardent love of God, a sacred devotedness to his will, a perfect indifference to the world, are qualifications essentially requisite; in the other, nothing more is necessary than calm attention, and a sound, unbiassed judgment. Yet, even in our Lord's days, "publicans and harlots entered into the kingdom of heaven" before the strictest Pharisee: they who violated the law under which they were living, before those who were most careful to observe its minutest requisitions. No doubt, the pious and virtuous man, as such, possesses great advantages in the investigation of religious truth, above the irreligious and the indifferent; but if the good man brings with him to the important investigation, as I apprehend he most commonly does, a mind strongly biassed by education and various other circumstances, in favour of a particular system of religious doctrines, he is not so well qualified to form an impartial judgment, as one who, though he may not be so much under the influence of religious principle, is, at the same time, free from the misleading influence of any preconceived opinions.

The passage which has drawn forth these animadversions, is not, I am sorry to say, the only instance of the perversion of Dr. Priestley's words, with which you are chargeable. In another note on one part of that passage, you observe, (p. 60,) "By Dr. Priestley we are informed, that 'the greater part of his philosophical acquaintance * ridiculed his belief of Christianity.' See the Preface to his

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* They do not seem, then, to have acknowledged "the accordance of the dogmas of his No-Creed with philosophical prejudices;" or, to have "masked, or shrouded themselves, under the friendly veil of Socinianism."

*Letters to Mr. Burn*, and the Note. And yet Dr. P. in a letter to Mr. Lindsey, (dated *Northumberland, April* 23, 1800,) says of the President Jefferson, 'If he is an unbeliever, he cannot be far from us.'" The interpretation which your readers will naturally put upon this last sentence, (which they will, of course, regard as an accurate quotation of Dr. P.'s words;) and the interpretation, which, from the following part of your note, you evidently intend they should put upon it, is, that Dr. P. himself, acknowledges, that Unitarianism and infidelity are closely connected; that, by being an unbeliever, a man makes the nearest possible approach to Unitarianism. If it were, as you have declared it to be, one characteristic of Unitarians, that "they can misrepresent, or garble, the statements of their adversaries," (p. 9,) they might congratulate themselves, should they be disposed to regard it as a subject for congratulation, that the Archdeacon of Cleveland *is not far from them*. Dr. Priestley's words, fairly quoted, and taken in their proper connexion, will convey no such sentiment as you wish to be attributed to them. The letter to Mr. Lindsey, in which they occur, inclosed a copy of a letter from Mr. Jefferson to Dr. Priestley, acknowledging the receipt of a work presented to him by Dr. P., intitled "*Socrates and Jesus Compared*," and containing a brief sketch of his view of the Christian system. In this sketch, Mr. Jefferson pronounces a very high eulogium on the founder of Christianity, and speaks of "the *unthinking* part of mankind as throwing off the system in disgust, and passing sentence, as an impostor, on the most innocent, the most benevolent, the most eloquent, and sublime character, that was ever exhibited to mankind." Dr. Priestley thus writes to his friend, Mr. Lindsey:—"In my last, I promised to send you a copy of Mr. Jefferson's letter, on reading my pamphlet, intitled, '*Socrates and*

*Jesus Compared.*' The above is that copy. He is generally considered as an unbeliever: if so, however, he cannot be far from us; and I hope, in the way to be not only almost, but altogether, what we are. * He now attends public worship very regularly, and his moral conduct was never impeached." Now, I ask, what is the interpretation which every candid reader would give to the sentence you have quoted? What, indeed, is the interpretation which alone it will bear? Is it not, that although Mr. Jefferson might possibly be, as it was generally supposed, an unbeliever, yet the view he had taken of the Christian doctrine, and of the character of its Founder, was such as to justify the hope, that he would soon become avowedly a Christian. Is there no disingenuousness and unfairness, in thus taking a passage out of its connexion, and perverting its plain and obvious meaning? And you, who can make so much of a *forsooth*, a *to be sure*, a *vouchsafe*, and even *a note of admiration*, could hardly be unaware of the force of the little word *however*, which you carefully suppressed in your quotation. This was prudently done, no doubt, whether honestly or not, let the reader determine.

You have referred your readers to the Preface of Dr. Priestley's Letters to Mr. Burn. If the friends of Dr. P. could imagine that you really desired that your readers should avail themselves of this reference, they might offer you their thanks; as a perusal of that Preface, and of the Letters themselves, would do much to counteract the effect

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* A Christian, undoubtedly. Dr. P. had evidently in his mind, the wish expressed by Paul before Agrippa. (Acts, xxvi. 20.) He was not thinking of Unitarianism.

of your misrepresentations, and to allay the prejudices which you have laboured to keep alive against this distinguished writer, and most excellent man. But, no doubt, you know the temper of those for whom you write, too well, to be under any apprehension, that they would trouble themselves to turn to the reference. For such, however, as may condescend to notice these pages, I will transcribe a note, connected with the passage which you have cited from that Preface. It contains some facts, which ought to be regarded as of no little importance. "When I was at Paris," observes Dr. Priestley, "after a very free and serious conversation on the subject of *religion*, I was told by one of the company, that I was the only person they had ever met with, of whose understanding they had any opinion, who pretended to believe Christianity: when I asked, what there was in Christianity that appeared to them so very absurd, as to make it altogether incredible; they immediately mentioned *the doctrine of the Trinity*. An enemy, as I am considered, to Christianity, by some, I have saved many from that *infidelity*, into which the bigots are forcing them. While I am writing this Preface, I receive a letter from a man, (Robert Robinson,) whose abilities are universally acknowledged to be of the first rate, with whom I had no previous correspondence, who says, 'I am indebted to you for the little I know of rational, defensible, Christianity. But for your friendly aid, I fear I should have gone on from *enthusiasm* to *deism*; but a faith, founded upon evidence, rests on a rock.'—As a contrast to the conduct of many bigots in this country, I shall further observe, that when I was abroad, (in 1774,) a very sincere Catholic priest, hearing that on all occasions, I avowed my belief of Christianity, embraced me with tears literally running down his cheeks, saying, that all who were called *philosophers* that he had

met with before, were *atheists*. I told him, that though I was a Christian, I was, what he would call, *a great heretic*. He replied, speaking English, 'No matter, you are a Christian.' At home, where I ought to be better known, I am considered as one who is assiduously undermining Christianity."—*Pref. to Letters to Mr. Burn, Works*, vol. xix. p. 310.—But Dr. P. might be, and, no doubt was, consoled, by recollecting who it was that had cause to say, even of himself, "A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house." (Matt. xiii. 57; Luke iv. 24.)

Having already noticed the most serious of your charges against Unitarians in general, respecting their alleged want of reverence for the Scriptures, it will not be necessary to say much in vindication of Dr. Priestley on this point. If any one was inconsiderate enough to proclaim him "magnanimous," for pronouncing the Mosaic history of the Creation and Fall of Man, a "lame account," (p. 25,) he did not so esteem himself; but regretted that such an expression had escaped from him, and retracted it. As to the other expressions which you have attributed to him, (note 2, p. 41,) since you have given no specific reference, and I do not recollect to have met with them in any of his works, pardon me, if I avow a suspicion that they are not accurately cited. I am not, however, prepared to defend every position on the subject of the knowledge, the inspiration, or the authority of the sacred writers, that Dr. Priestley may have advanced; or to justify the manner in which he may have sometimes

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* See his *Defences of Unitarianism*, for 1787, p. 65—*Works*, vol. xviii. p. 466.

stated opinions, the truth of which I admit. But I would strenuously protest against the mode of attaking him on this ground, adopted by Abp. Magee, and those, who like yourself, are content, in the same warfare, to pick up and to hurl the fragments of the weapons, (I cannot call them *splendid,)* with which that right rev. champion has bestrewed the arena, (p. 3.) It is most illiberal and unjust. The effect, and I fear, the designed effect, of the citation of "a few unguarded expressions, arising from the haste and warmth of controversy, or the ardour of investigation," is to lead to the conclusion, that Dr. Priestley treated the Sacred Writings with contempt, as worthy of little credit, and destitute of all authority, in respect either of faith or practice. But nothing can be further from the truth, than such a conclusion. For, though he might occasionally indulge in speculations, on which a less bold and ardent mind would not have entered; or the results of which, a more cautious lover of free inquiry and of truth, would have kept to himself; though, as I apprehend, from mistaking the meaning of the sacred writers on some points, he may have erroneously questioned their accuracy; yet, it is not too much to be said, that few men have more highly valued the Scriptures, or contributed more to render them truly valuable and useful to mankind. He strenuously and successfully defended them from the attacks of unbelievers; he warmly recommended them to the serious and constant attention of professing Christians. It formed a regular part of his public services, as a Christian minister, to read and explain them to his people; and he has left for the instruction of other religious societies, and of private families, a valuable body of notes, composed for that service, on the whole of the Bible. By the daily study of the Scriptures, from the beginning to the close of

life,* he formed and cherished that spirit of habitual devotion, which not only breathes in all his practical writings, but, as those who knew him will testify, was so distinguished a part of his character. By the Scriptures he professed to be directed and guided in every scene of active duty; and to them he looked, and not in vain, in every season of trial and suffering, and on the bed of sickness and death, for consolation, and hope, and joy. The few strong expressions, upon which the enemies of this truly good man have laid so great a stress, and of which they have taken such an unfair advantage, do not exhibit the general strain of his writings, in reference to the Scriptures. Let any serious, candid inquirer, read his devotional and practical works, and even those of a controversial and speculative nature, and he will feel a very different impression on his mind from that which these few unguarded, and often misrepresented, expressions are adapted to make. And, surely, the character of an author should be judged by the general spirit and tendency of his writings; not by a few phrases carefully selected to serve a party purpose. By this test, let Dr.

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* In the very interesting and edifying account of his death, written by his eldest son, the biographer says, "On Sunday," (the day before he died,) "he was much weaker, and only sat up in his arm-chair while his bed was made. He desired me to read to him the 11th chapter of John. I was going on to read to the end of the chapter, but he stopped me at the 45th verse. He dwelt for some time on the advantage he had derived from reading the Scriptures daily, and advised me to do the same; saying, that it would prove to me, as it had done to him, a source of the purest pleasure."—*Memoirs of Dr. Priestley*, vol. i. p. 217.—The whole account of that solemn scene, which, it is acknowledged, "conveys but a very inadequate idea of the composure and cheerfulness of the last moments" of this truly pious man, deserves the attention, not only of unbelievers, to whom the biographer recommends it, but of those who have formed their opinion of him, from the misrepresentations and calumnies of his theological adversaries.

Priestley's reverence for the Scriptures be tried; and his warmest friends and admirers will have no fear as to the result.

But with the writings of this excellent person, whose memory you have studied to injure, you, Sir, have given abundant proof, that you have a very limited acquaintance. Nor have you formed, nor, as I conceive, can you form, a just estimate of his character. You could not, otherwise, have supposed, (p. 44,) that "in the loneliness of his trans-atlantic exile, the fluctuating philosopher, (as you are pleased sneeringly to call him,) on contrasting the merited success of his physical speculations with his detected failures in religious controversy, must have bitterly regretted the moment, when he exchanged the peaceful retirement of his laboratory, for the virulent bickerings of a schismatical theology." I envy not the feelings that can move any one to speak with cold indifference, if not with complacency, of an event which ought to awaken the sympathy of all, but especially of men of science and letters; * and which will ever reflect disho-

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*"With no such flippancy and apparent want of feeling, does a celebrated French philosopher speak, in reference to this occurrence, and of the character of this excellent person:—

"Extreme ardour in defending his sentiments, rendered him the object of implacable hatred. He was long exposed to every species of calumny; he was frequently the victim of inhuman persecution. A mob, excited by the falsehoods of his enemies, destroyed, in one day, the fruit of all his labours; and it was only by quitting his country, that he found it possible to abate the fury of his persecutors. But, when his own countrymen seemed to abandon him, several nations came forward to offer him an honourable asylum; and even at this moment, whilst the principal literary institution of a people, at war with his native country, is rendering him, by my mouth, the last sad tribute which is paid to all its members, I behold within these walls, many whom he has

nour upon the age and country in which it was allowed to take place. But, whatever satisfaction it may afford you, to reflect on the unmerited exile into which the venerable confessor was driven by the fury of a high-church mob, I beg leave to assure you, that what you have figured to yourself, as the employment of his mind there, is altogether delusive and visionary. The theology to which his attention was devoted, and which you are pleased to call "schismatical," was of the most important and useful kind: the evidences of Revelation, the primitive doctrines of the

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opposed, who are yet uniting with me, and completing his triumph, by their generous praise.

"His enemies vented their malice, by publishing the vilest calumnies, in periodical writings and political pamphlets. We meet with few examples of such violent hatred; and this inhuman desire to blacken the character of a man, who did so much honour to his native country, would be inexplicable, if we had not seen, in the last fifteen years," (this was written in 1806,) "so many instances of the effect of party spirit in poisoning the mind; and, if fifteen centuries had not shewn with what fury those invectives are uttered, whose pretext is of a sacred nature. Nothing in Priestley's disposition seems calculated to inspire such enmity. The controversies in which he engaged, had no influence on his feelings; far from being haughty and turbulent, his conversation displayed all the modesty apparent in his writings. Nothing was easier to him, than to say, 'I know not:' words which could not be uttered without great pain, by the generality of men, who are learned by profession.

"His last moments witnessed the effusions of that piety, which had animated his whole life.—He requested to have a part of the New Testament read to him: afterwards, he thanked God for granting him a life of usefulness, and a peaceful death. 'I am going to sleep, like you,' said he to his grandchildren, who were brought to him;" (on the night before he died;) "'but we shall all awake together,' added he, looking at the persons who were attending him, 'and, I hope, to eternal happiness.' Such was the end of this man, whom his enemies had so long accused of attempting to overthrow all religion and morality." —*Cuvier's Eulogy of Dr. Priestley, at the Public Sitting of the National Institute.*

Gospel, the history of the Christian Church, the principles of religious liberty, the present duties, and the future expectations of man. The great object, which, as a theologian, he pursued, was to make those who would attend to him, enlightened, zealous, and practical Christians: to shew them on what a stable ground their faith was founded; to persuade them to admit into their creed, no other doctrines than those which Christ and his apostles had delivered; and to urge them to honour their Christian profession by a holy, a virtuous, and a useful life. If, in the pursuit of this great object, he was assailed by any who could not acquiesce in his representations of scriptural truth, he manifested the utmost readiness to listen to every objection they had to propose, and to examine it with the most perfect impartiality. He had no attachment to any opinions, but so far as they appeared to him to be true; and was as ready to relinquish what he could not justify, as he was firm in adhering to what he thought he could establish by sufficient proofs.—"Virulent bickerings" is a phrase that cannot be justly applied even to his warmest controversial writings. He was no *bickerer*, no *skirmisher*. He engaged in what he felt to be a momentous and an arduous contest, in defence of genuine Christianity; and he engaged in it with all his might, fairly, honourably and, I will add, not without success,—success as distinguished and as merited as any that attended his physical speculations. *Virulence* belonged not to him. His language may be occasionally strong, but it is not bitter; and the severest expressions he ever employs, betray no resentment or malignity, but only a virtuous indignation against groundless suspicions, misrepresentations, and calumnies, tending at once to injure his own character, and to impede the progress of truth. But whatever may have been the nature of his theological controversies, he

could not regret the moment in which he exchanged for them the peaceful retirement of his laboratory; for such an exchange was never made. From an early period of his life, till the last day of it, theology was his favourite pursuit, and his laboratory the scene of his relaxation from severer studies. Even "in the loneliness of his trans-atlantic exile," he continued, with undiminished ardour, his researches, both as an experimental philosopher and a divine; still anxious, as he had ever been, by his success in the former, to procure the attention of men of liberal and enlightened minds, to his numerous writings in favour of revealed religion and genuine Christianity. He might regret the stain which his country had brought upon herself, by the obloquy and persecution he had suffered; he might regret the cruel necessity by which he was compelled to seek refuge in a foreign land, and in the evening of his days, far from long-valued friends and associates, and all those sources of knowledge to which he had been accustomed to apply, not for his own gratification, but for the public good: but it was with no sentiments of regret that he looked back upon any of his pursuits, and least of all, upon his theological labours. In these, he had engaged with a single eye to the glory of God. Their fruits he was permitted to witness in a more general and increasing attention to the doctrine of the divine Unity, and other doctrines connected with it, in the land of his exile, as well as in that which gave him birth; and, firmly believing that all events are under the constant and benevolent superintendence of Providence, he "looked back upon the evils to which he had been occasionally exposed, without any resentment with respect to men, and with gratitude to the Supreme Disposer of all things, for the salutary discipline of which they had been a part;" and forwards, with joyful anticipation, to a

future world, "where all the evils, natural and moral, incident to the present state, having answered the great purpose of forming the mind to true excellence, will be done away."* Such was the admirable state of his mind "in the loneliness of his trans-atlantic exile!"

"From his contest with Bp. Horsley," you peremptorily assert, (p. 44,) "he reaped nothing but defeat and ignominy." How far you are qualified to proclaim the victor in this memorable contest, will be better seen, when some other of your assertions shall have been considered:—"He was convicted," you say, "of reasoning in a circle, (or, what his illustrious adversary elsewhere calls, 'the circulating syllogism,') of misapplying quotations, through ignorance of the writer's subject; of perverting testimonies, by artful and forced constructions; of misinterpreting passages in the Greek Fathers, through ignorance of the Greek language, or through the same ignorance, driven further out of the way, by an ignorance of the Platonic philosophy; and of being unacquainted with the phraseology of the earliest ecclesiastical writers. If, instead of saying, "he was convicted," you been content with saying, "he was accused" of these things, you would have asserted no more than the truth: but, though his illustrious adversary, with great boldness, and often with great bitterness, advanced these charges against him, he was not able to substantiate them. In his Introductory Letter, in *Answer to Dr. Horsley's Animadversions on the Corruptions of Christianity*, Dr. Priestley clearly proved that he had not been guilty of using the 'circulating syllo-

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* See the *Preface to his Notes on all the Books of Scripture*, pp. xvii. xviii.

gism;' and, as to a knowledge of the Platonic philosophy, and the phraseology of the earliest ecclesiastical writers, I am greatly mistaken indeed, if any truly impartial person ever rose from the perusal of the controversy between these two illustrious disputants, without feeling persuaded, that he was "not a whit behind" his boastful and contemptuous adversary. With the candour which was so striking and so characteristic a feature of his mind, Dr. Priestley acknowledged a few mistakes, into which, through inadvertency, he had fallen, in his quotations from the Fathers; but, at the same time, he shewed that they were of comparatively little importance, in no degree affecting the main parts of the controversy, and the consequence of haste, not of ignorance or artifice. Of wilful perversion of authorities, of artful constructions of passages, to serve his cause, I am confident he was altogether incapable. "I am not conscious," said he to his accuser, * "of any unfairness in any part of my proceedings, but have a perfect willingness to bring before the public every thing that may enable them to form a true judgment on the subject of this controversy. If I knew of any circumstance favourable to your argument, I would produce it as readily as I should do any thing in favour of my own; and I am as willing to detect my own mistakes, as you, or any person, can be to do it for me. For this, I appeal to the tenor of all my writings, and to my general character, which, I will venture to say, is as fair as your's." After such a generous avowal, fully supported by the whole course of that memorable contest, can it be deemed candid or honourable to repeat, without any qualification, these accusations by Horsley? The avowal must,

* See *Letters to Dr. Horsley*, part ii. p. 189.—*Works*, vol. xviii. p. 263.

undoubtedly, have escaped your recollection: perhaps it never met your eye.

You proceed in the sarcastic, contemptuous style, which marks almost every page, to say, "Yet Dr. Priestley must try his hand at *Improved* Versions of parts of the New Testament! e. g. 1 John iv. 2. Ιησουν Χριστον ΕΝ σαρκι εληλυθοτα, which we render, 'Jesus Christ come in the flesh,' he translates, 'Jesus Christ come *of* the flesh'; making *simply* the difference of an Incarnation and a mortal extraction! To be sure, there is no support to be found for this Version in the Greek text, scrutinised through all it's MSS.; but then St. John, like St. Paul, might 'in reasoning be inconclusive, (*Hist. of Corruptions*, ii. 370,) or in language inaccurate, and therefore require the supervisal of a corrector *never convicted of either!*" But this sarcasm, at least, might have been spared; and it ought to have been spared; for it is founded on a misrepresentation. Dr. Priestley did not try his hand at an Improved Version of this passage in John. This charge against him is not your own: like all the rest which you have advanced, it is borrowed; and it here appears in almost the same words in which it was originally laid by the Archdeacon of St. Alban's.* But what said Dr. Priestley in reply? About this

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* The following is the passage, as it stands in the Archdeacon of St. Alban's Charge:—"It appears, that to confess that 'Jesus Christ is come in the flesh,' and to affirm that Jesus Christ is truly a man, are propositions not perfectly equivalent. Dr. Priestley, indeed, hath shewn himself very sensible of the difference. He would not otherwise have found it necessary, for the improvement of his argument, in reciting the third verse of the fourth chapter of St. John's First Epistle, to change the expressions which he found in the public translation, for others which correspond far less exactly with the Greek text.

you either gave yourself no trouble; or judiciously abstained from troubling your readers with it. They ought not, however, to remain uninformed. "I am sorry, Sir," he observed in his Letters to Dr. Horsley, "that my printer, or my own mistake, should have given you all this trouble in consulting MSS., &c. I do assure you, I had no knowledge of having made a change of a single word, in copying that text, nor should I have wished to have made any change at all in it; thinking, that as it now stands, it is quite as much for my purpose as that which you suppose I have purposely substituted in its place. Had you thought me capable of an attempt of this kind, you should not have ascribed to me, as you have done, the greatest *purity of intention*, in all that I have written on this subject." *

As an advocate for Dr. Priestley, I may surely be permitted to ask, whether you knew that he had thus vindicated himself? If you did, was it candid, or indeed, just, to repeat the accusation, and take no notice of the defence? Or, knowing that Dr. Priestley had disclaimed the design

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For the words 'Jesus Christ is come IN the flesh,' Dr. Priestley substitutes these: 'Jesus Christ is come OF the flesh.' That he is come IN the flesh and that he is come OF the flesh, are two very distinct propositions. The one affirms an incarnation, the other a mortal extraction. The first is St. John's assertion; the second is Dr. Priestley's. Perhaps Dr. Priestley hath discovered of St. John, as of St. Paul, that his reasoning is sometimes inconclusive, (*Hist. of Corruptions*, vol. ii. p. 370,) and his language inaccurate; and he might think it no unwarrantable liberty to correct an expression, which, as not perfectly corresponding with his own system, he could not entirely approve. It would have been but fair to advertise his readers of so capital an emendation—an emendation for which no support is to be found in the Greek text, nor even in the varieties of any MSS."—*Tracts in Controv. with Dr. Priestley*, p. 16, 17.

* *Letters to Dr. Horsley*, p. 11.—*Works*, vol. xviii. p. 53.

of altering the common version in this place, did you, with his ungenerous adversary, deem his word unworthy of credit? Even in that case, were you not in honour bound, to assign some reason for refusing to admit his exculpation? But I cannot persuade myself to believe that it was known to you. I cannot suppose, for a moment, that you would have renewed the charge, if you had been aware of the existence of the vindication. Here, as in most other instances, you shew yourself to be acquainted with the writings only on one side. You may be conversant with the works of Horsley;—to Priestley's you are a stranger. Does it then become you to decide upon the respective merits of those illustrious disputants? Are you qualified to declare, with so much confidence, that "from his contest with Bp. Horsley, Dr. Priestley reaped nothing but defeat and ignominy?" I deny your competency for the office of umpire, and affirm that the decision is unjust. From a careful attention to the whole of that interesting controversy—interesting, both from the subjects discussed, and the talents of the disputants, I have been long since led to an opposite conclusion; and I maintain, and am ready to prove, that the victory was rightly claimed by Dr. Priestley. On one or two points of minor importance, I allow that he was foiled: but on every leading question, and especially on that which formed the chief topic of discussion, *the existence of a church of Orthodox Hebrew Christians at Ælia*, he was decidedly and triumphantly victorious. It would be obviously improper to extend my Letter, already perhaps too long, by stating the grounds of this decision; and it is unnecessary. The subject has been treated with his characteristic perspicuity and force of argument, by my venerable friend, Mr. Belsham; and if I did not too well know the power of prejudice, I should say, that no one

could peruse what he has written upon it, without coming to the same conclusion. *

To what a dearth of matter for crimination must you have felt yourself reduced, when you condescended to borrow for this purpose, a portion of a note, added by Dr. Horsley to his First Letter, in reply to Dr. Priestley, when he published the *Collection of his Tracts*. For such is the next passage that occurs, in page 44, with only two or three minute verbal alterations, and the addition of that important auxiliary, a mark of admiration. And what is this additional charge? That "Dr. Priestley, in one of his Letters to Dr. Horsley, attempts to prove that Clement of Alexandria, though himself no Unitarian, *might* (for aught any one now knows to the contrary) have said something in behalf of the Unitarians, in his lost Work of the 'Hypotyposes'!" To notice such a cavil is no agreeable employment; as wearisome to me, as I fear it will be to my readers; yet I cannot properly forbear. Though an ancient work be lost, may it not be possible, from remaining testimonies by ancient authors, as to its nature and design; from the known character of the author, and of other works of his still existing; from the opinions of the times, and various other circumstances, to form some highly probably conjectures respecting the contents of that work? and may not a writer on the side of one party, be compelled to make such admissions or concessions, as shall, in fact, be favourable to the cause to which he is opposed? These things, you must

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* See *Calm Inquiry*, 2d edit. p. 270, &c.; *Letters to the Bishop of David's*, annexed to *A Letter to the Unitarian Christians in South Wales*; and *The Claims of Dr. Priestley, &c. in Reply to the Rev. Heneage Horsley, &c.*

surely allow, may happen; and Dr. Priestley, therefore, may not have been guilty of the weakness and absurdity which, I conceive, you mean to lay to his charge, in arguing from a lost work, and in conjecturing that an orthodox Father gave evidence in favour of a heterodox party. His own words, indeed, will shew, that he has advanced nothing but what is perfectly reasonable. "Though Clemens Alexandrinus," he observes, "was not an Unitarian, yet he never calls Unitarians heretics; and since, in his accounts of *heretics in general*, which are pretty frequent in his works, he evidently means the Gnostics only, and therefore, virtually excludes Unitarians from that description of men; it is by no means improbable, but that in those writings of his which are lost, * he might have said things directly in favour of Unitarians."—*Letters to Dr. Horsley*, part ii. p. 196.—*Works*, vol. xviii. p. 266.—Surely there is no ground for caviling in these remarks.

That Dr. Priestley erroneously referred to Bp. Bull's work, intitled *Judicium Ecclesiæ Catholicæ, &c.* as containing a Defence of the Damnatory Clause in the Athanasian Creed, must be allowed. The whole of the sentence, in which you allege this against him, (p. 44,) is also copied, with the exception of a climax of marks of admiration, from another note in Dr. Horsley's *Collection of Tracts*, &c. p. 285, and consequently is a very exaggerated statement of the fact. Dr. Priestley, without hesitation, acknowledges that he was not perfectly correct; but at the same time, shews

* Though the Hypotyposes must be included in those, Dr. Priestley does not specify that work. The direct reference to it is made by Dr. Horsley only.

that the error was of no consequence, whatever, nor deserving of a moment's consideration. Granting that "he had become acquainted with that Prelate's works, in consequence of their having been referred to by 'the ponderous erudition' of his giant antagonist," he was not, on that account, the less qualified to understand the doctrines of the New Testament, or to decide concerning the opinions of the Ante-Nicene Fathers. Admitting, also, that he was misled by the title of one of Bp. Bull's works, and ascribed to it more than it in fact contains, it only follows, that in that instance he was too precipitate, and not sufficiently careful in examining his ground. His inaccuracy did not affect the character of the right rev. author; who, though he does not defend the Damnatory Clause in the Athanasian Creed, in his *Judicium Ecclesiæ Catholicæ, &c.* yet strenuously vindicates the anathema in the Nicene. But what shall we say of the ingenuousness of the giant antagonist, who, with his ponderous erudition, not only pretended to an accurate knowledge of a work, which *he became acquainted with only by finding it referred to by Bp. Bull*, but actually charged Dr. Priestley with following the "extravagant assertions," and employing the arguments it contains; * and, when Dr. Priestley disclaimed any knowledge of the work, taunted him with being "little redde in the principal writers either on his own side of the question, or the opposite?" Yet, of this work, by Daniel Zuicker, Dr. Horsley knew no more than he had found in the *Defensio Fidei, &c.* of Bp. Bull; and as it afterwards appeared, misrepresented it far more than Dr. Priestley had misrepresented the *Judicium Ecclesiæ Catholicæ, &c.* †

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* *Horsley's Charge, &c. Tracts*, p. 7—9.

† "You charged me," observes Dr. Priestley, "with having 'produced few, if any, arguments, but what are to be found in the writings either of Zuicker, or Episcopius.' From this, it might naturally be concluded, that you had *com-*

After these impotent attempts to injure the reputation of a man, whose name will be had in grateful remembrance as a friend of truth, religion, and virtue; as an ornament and a benefactor to his species, when no vestige of the existence of many of his most bitter adversaries shall remain, you wisely determine not "to go on." Yet you cannot leave the pleasing subject, till you have sneeringly repeated his memorable declaration to his friend Dr. Price, that "he could not pretend to say when his creed would be fixed:" a declaration which has been sarcastically cited a thousand times; but which, however it may be received by those who are bound down to the belief and profession of a system of articles of faith, to which many, I fear, subscribe their solemn assent, before they have inquired into their accordance with the words of revelation, will ever be esteemed by those who are not held in such bondage, and the object of whose pursuit is religious truth, as in the highest degree ingenuous and noble—worthy of a man and a Christian. You, at length, conclude this long vituperative note, by impeaching his credit as an ecclesiastical historian, because he has not introduced into his account of the origin of the

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*pared* my arguments with those of these two writers, and had found them to be the same; which implies that you had *seen* and *perused* their works. I entertained no doubt of it myself; and taking it for granted that your lordship had the work of *Zuicker*, or had access to it, (and it being a book that I had never seen, and could not by any means procure,) I desired a common friend to apply to you for it. Your answers, which were different at different times, convinced him that you had never seen the book at all. It has since been sent to me by a learned foreign correspondent, and I find *Zuicker's* views of the state of opinions in early times, so different from mine, that I am confident, *if* you had ever *seen* his work, you had never *read* it: for if you had, you could never have asserted that I had borrowed from him at all."—*Letters to the Bishop of St. David's*, Let. iii.—*Works*, vol. xix. pp. 18, 19.

Christian Church, any notice of certain doctrines, the truth of which he denied. Upon the very same ground, you might question the authority of the great Father of ecclesiastical history; for I do not recollect that even Eusebius of Cæsarea, has dwelt upon all the topics to which you refer. You might, indeed, object even to the Gospel by Mark, for he, as well as Dr. Priestley, is silent respecting any "extraordinary circumstances of the birth of the Founder" of Christianity. I can readily allow, that there are many points of Christian antiquity, on which a greater depth of research might have been desirable; and, with respect to the later volumes, much allowance is required, and much will be made by every candid reader, for the disadvantageous circumstances under which they were compiled, arising unavoidably out of "the loneliness of his trans-atlantic exile;" but as a General History of the Church; as containing a more just account of the progress of opinions concerning the person of Christ, and of the corruptions of Christianity, than can elsewhere be found; and as "giving young persons more especially an idea of the great value of Christianity, by shewing its influence on the minds of those who first received it, and how nobly it led them to think and act," it will be acknowledged, by every impartial reader, to be inestimable. Let the execution of the work be compared with the avowed design of the author, and that design fairly appreciated, and every unprejudiced judge will know what "to pronounce of the historian."

I cannot close this long Letter, without briefly adverting to your attack on Mr. Belsham, (p. 41,) for having, as you say, "in an unguarded burst, which it is painful to transcribe, represented the promised Messiah as a man, constituted in all respects like other men, subject to the same

infirmities, the same ignorance, prejudices, and frailties'! appearing even to insinuate, that his 'private life' might possibly have been less 'pure and unimpeachable' than his public conduct!!" To judge properly of this 'unguarded burst,' the reader must attend to Mr. Belsham's own words, which are these: "The moral character of Christ, through the whole course of his *public ministry*, as recorded by the evangelists, is pure and unimpeachable in every particular. Whether this perfection of character in *public* life, combined with the general declarations of his freedom from sin, establish, or were intended to establish, the fact, that Jesus, through the whole course of his *private* life, was completely exempt from all the errors and frailties of human nature, is a question of no great intrinsic moment, and concerning which we have no sufficient data to lead to a satisfactory conclusion."—*Calm Inquiry*, pt. i. § 5, p. 122, 2d edit.—With my excellent friend, Dr. Carpenter, (to whose able remarks, in reply to Magee, who misrepresented this passage before you, I have already referred, p. 55,) I cordially agree, that "as Mr. Belsham thinks it is a question of no great intrinsic moment, and not to be decided, it might, for the sake of others, have been left unmoved." And with him, also, "I am sure that the discriminating, equitable reader cannot but perceive, (1.) That by *private life*, Mr. Belsham does not mean" (as the Bishop and yourself, not Mr. B., seem to insinuate,) "what passed in private, during our Lord's public ministry; but in the period before his baptism: (2.) That the expression, *the errors and failings of human nature*, is clearly put in contra-distinction to *sin*: (3.) That, therefore, Mr. Belsham's statement has no reference whatever to *sinful acts*, but merely to such errors and failings as cannot be considered as sin."* To the judgment

* *Carpenter's Reply to Magee*, p. 278.

of the equitable and candid reader, I leave the passage which it gave you pain to transcribe, because you did not rightly interpret it; only begging him to remember, at the same time, what is the necessary consequence of our blessed Lord's being, what even the believers in his Deity acknowledge him to have been, "perfect man;" and also the authority on which we are taught, that he "*was in all points tempted like as* we are, yet *without sin*;" and that, "*though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.*"*

I think I have now noticed all the serious charges you have brought against Unitarians. If I have omitted any, I believe they will not be found of much importance. I have certainly passed by none from a conviction that they cannot be repelled. I may perhaps be blamed for dwelling upon some, which might have been disregarded as altogether frivolous and insignificant; and I should have disregarded them, had they proceeded from an inferior adversary. I may also be thought to have dwelt too largely upon those which demanded attention; but this has been unavoidable: for what Dr. Carpenter has said of the Abp. of Dublin is applicable to yourself, with all who follow him, that "it is one of the worst features of his controversial system, that his misrepresentations are frequently so subtile, and his perversions of our arguments so refined, that what occupies him perhaps only a few lines, may require pages to develope." I regret the necessity of so lengthened a defence; but if, in pleading the cause of principles that I deem most sacred, and of characters that I hold in high and merited honour,

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* *Heb.* iv. 15; v. 8.

I have not been altogether unsuccessful, nor unmindful of the spirit which becomes a disciple of Him, "who, when he was reviled, reviled not again;" while I trust that my prolixity will be excused, I shall have no cause to regret, that painful as the task has been, I have ventured to undertake it.

I am, Reverend Sir,

Your obedient servant,

C. WELLBELOVED.

# LETTER III.

"It is no wonder if men can accommodate Scripture expressions to their own dreams and fancies; for when men's fancies are so possessed with schemes and ideas of religion, whatever they look on, appears of the same shape and colour wherewith their minds are already tinctured...All the metaphors, and similitudes, and allegories of Scripture, are easily applied to their purpose; and if any word sound like the tinkling of their own fancies, it is no less than a demonstration that that is the meaning of the Spirit of God; and every little shadow and appearance doth mightily confirm them in their pre-conceived opinions."—*Dean Sherlock.*

"To us there is but ONE GOD, THE FATHER, of whom are all things, and we in him; and ONE LORD JESUS CHRIST, by whom are all things, and we by him."—*Paul.*

"For there is ONE GOD, and ONE MEDIATOR between God and man; THE MAN Christ Jesus."—*Paul.*

REVEREND SIR,

I COME now, as I proposed, to examine your defence of the Creed of the Established Church, so far as it relates to the doctrine of the Trinity. In doing this, I shall pursue the same method as in my last Letter; considering, in detail, that part of your Charge, which you have devoted to this subject; and as I go along, adverting to such portions of the Appendix and Notes, as are connected with that part. But the examination must necessarily be much more brief than might be desirable; since, as you very justly observe, "the hours required for the full discussion of so arduous a subject, are matter of no light consideration to the already-

occupied student. Many and painful (to adopt, with you, the words of Bp. Horne) are the researches usually necessary to be made for settling points of this kind. Pertness and ignorance * may ask a question in three lines, which it will cost learning and ingenuity thirty pages to answer." (p. 27.) A volume, and that not a small one, might easily be filled, by a complete consideration of all the topics which are introduced into this part of your Charge. While I notice all, or the greater part of them, I must be content to dwell only on the most important. My business must be not so much to establish Unitarian interpretations and views, as to endeavour to shew the weakness of those supports on which you have placed the cause of orthodoxy.

Having, with what truth and justice let the candid reader decide, described the doctrine of Unitarians, you turn round and exclaim, (p. 13,) "And shall we yield to such a system, from a contempt of the unfair modes of warfare used by it's abettors, an uncontested field? When, taunting us with the 'mysteries' of orthodoxy, they aim to *smite us on one cheek, shall we offer to them the other also?* Or, rather, shall we not teach them that what they simply regard as their exclusive and self-evident tenet, the Unity of the God-head, depends for it's certainty, upon the testimony of the Scriptures; and that the unity of Design, which pervades the natural world, proves only—to adopt the definition of our own luminous PALEY—a 'unity of Counsel?' What reason, in fact, have we for imagining that the Unity of God resembles, in any respect, that of a mere creature? To the Scriptures

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* Here I willingly and sincerely repeat your words also, "that I as little apply these terms to my opponent, as those immediately following to myself."

alone can we resort for information." That we *simply*, or as I suppose you mean, *sillily, foolishly* * regard the Unity of the God-head, as our exclusive tenet, I am not disposed to allow, till it shall be proved that there is not an essential difference between a God-head, consisting of three Minds, Persons, Hypostases, or by whatever other title they may be designated, and however strict and harmonious their union may be supposed to be, and a God-head consisting of one undivided Mind or Person. This last appears to us, alone consistent with the true notion of Unity, and it is exclusively the tenet of Unitarians. We are ready to acknowledge that it does depend for its certainty upon the testimony of the Scriptures, and to them, alone, we usually resort for information. But, notwithstanding the authority of "your own luminous Paley," whose definition, or concession, relates rather to the question between Monotheists and Polytheists, than to that between Unitarians and Trinitarians, we think that it may also be very satisfactorily deduced from the principles of natural religion: and further, that we are warranted in arguing concerning the nature of the Unity of God from analogy; and in conceiving of it, according to that notion of Unity, which observation, experience, and reason lead us to form. In this manner we are satisfied, and indeed compelled to reason and to judge respecting other truths relating to the Divine nature.

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* By such terms, and even worse, according to Dr. Horsley, the ancient Unitarians were described by the orthodox dignitaries of their days; *Simplices, imprudentes, idiotæ*, i. e. *Simple, ignorant persons, idiots:* for thus that very learned writer rendered the last term; thus rivalling Anthony Collins, the Deist, who translated Victor's *Ab Idiotis Evangelistis*, "*by Idiot-Evangelists;*" for doing which he received due castigation from Dr. Bentley, as did the Archdeacon of St. Alban's from Dr. Priestley.

I am not aware, however, that Unitarians dwell much upon proofs drawn from natural religion. Their chief reliance is on the Bible, "and there," you observe, (p. 14,) "in the very first page, we meet with terms applied to the Supreme Being, which inseparably combine the ideas of Plurality and Unity; terms, which gratuitous hypotheses of Orientalism, of the ordinary style of Royal Proclamations, or of the association of Angels, in the acts and decrees of Omnipotence, are vainly adduced to explain. To this argument no little strength accrues from the consideration, that those Scriptures were especially designed to counteract polytheistic tendencies in the people, to whom they were primarily delivered. Why then, it may be inquired, are plural appellations so frequently employed, in the original Hebrew, to designate the Godhead?" The answer is obvious, though, in the first part of this paragraph you refuse to admit it. It is an Orientalism, and such appellations do not inseparably combine the ideas of Plurality and Unity. That so much stress should be still laid upon the use of plural forms of names and phrases, after it has been so frequently and satisfactorily explained, not by controversial writers alone, but also by orthodox Hebrew grammarians; and the argument deduced from them rejected by Calvin himself, and various other Trinitarian commentators, is perfectly astonishing.* The ancient Christian Fathers, even

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* Thus the learned Hebrew grammarian Schroeder says, "Observanda est illa Hebraei sermonis proprietas, qua pluralis, tam masculinus, quam femininus, usurpari potest de *una* re, quæ, in suo genere, magna est et quodam modo excellens; ut ימים *maria*, pro *mari magno*; תנים *dracones*, pro *dracone prægrandi*; אדונים *domini*, pro *domino magno et potente*; אלהים *numina*, pro *numine admodum colendo*; קדשים *sancti*, pro *deo sanctissimo*; מכות *plagæ*, pro *plaga*

those who understood Hebrew, as Origen and Jerome, never discovered a proof of the Trinity in these plural appellations. It was, I believe, first suggested in the twelfth century, by Peter Lombard; and is worthy the subtlety of *the Master of the Sentences*. Your own Dawson has more justly decided, that "no mystery lies hid in this" idiom;

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*gravi*; נהרות *flumina*, pro *flumine magno*," &c.—*Institutiones ad Fund. Ling. Hebr.* See also *Storr. Obs. ad Anal. et Synt. Hebr.* p. 97—99.

"Pluralis forma apud Hebræos de singularibus *magnis et præstantibus* usurpari solet, unde *pluralis majestaticus* vulgo audit, quem jam h. l. ex Rabbinis Rab. Bechai et Abenesra admiserant, quemque non apud occidentales solum, sed et apud orientales populos vigere monstratum ad Coccei Lex. Hebr. p. 58. Plurales ejusmodi ob terminationem nonnunquam ut plurales tractantur: plerumque tamen ob *significationem* singularem, cum singularibus construuntur." —*Schulzii Schol. in Gen.* i. 1.

The words of Calvin, who "persecuted the way" of Unitarianism "unto death," are these:—"Ex plurali Elohim colligere solent, sic in Deo notari plures personas, sed quia mihi parum solida videtur tantæ rei probatio, ego in voce non insistam. Monendi itaque sunt Lectores ut sibi a violentis ejusmodi glossis caveant. Putant illi se testimonium habere adversos Arianos, ad probandam Filii et Spiritus sancti divinitatem, interea involvunt se in errorem Sabellii: quia postea subjicit Moses, Elohim loquutum esse, et Spiritum Elohim incubuisse aquis. Si tres personas notari placet, nulla erit earum distinctio. Sequitur enim et filium a se genitum, et spiritum non esse Patris, sed sui ipsius."—*Calvin. Comment. in loc.*—Many learned writers, both Catholics and Protestants, have indeed declared their full conviction, that these plural terms contain no evidence of a plurality of Persons in the God-head. Amongst these may be reckoned *Cajetan*, *Sixtus Senensis*, *Pererius*, *Petavius*, and *Drusius*. The remarks of the latter, who was eminently skilled in Hebrew, are particularly deserving of attention. They may be found, with the exception of those that occur in his *Diss: de nomine* אלהים *Crit. Sacr. Tractatt.* tom. i. collected together in an excellent little Tract, by *Cingallus*, (*C. Sandius,*) entitled *Scriptura Sanctæ Trin. Revelatrix.*—To the writers already mentioned, I may add *Lindsey*, *Apol.* chap. iii; and *Yates*, *Reply to Wardlaw*, pt. iii. chap. 2.

"and they who infer from hence both the Unity of God, and a plurality of persons in the Godhead, not only shew themselves to be void of true critical skill, but, by producing and urging such weak and frivolous arguments in its defence, do a manifest injury to the cause which they are so zealous to support and establish."* If these terms inseparably combine the ideas of Plurality and Unity, permit me to ask you in my turn, why they are applied to false Deities, (See Ex. xxxii. 3, 4, &c.; Judg. viii. 33; xvi. 23, 24, &c.) and even to men? (See Gen. xl. 1, &c.; Exod. iv. 6; Ps. lxxxii. 6.) Why the term Aleim (or Elohim) is used in Ps. xlv. 8, according to the common interpretation of that passage, of the Father only, in contradistinction to the Son:—what is to be understood by the Spirit of God, or the Spirit of Aleim, (Gen. i. 1,) if the term Aleim, comprehends Father, Son, and Spirit:—and how it has happened that the Jews themselves have never drawn the same inference from these terms, but in every age have maintained, in the strictest sense, the doctrine of the divine Unity?

If I am not greatly mistaken, you have felt this last difficulty; but you have taken rather a curious method to solve it. For in this light I consider the note in p. 61, to which your readers are referred. "These terms," you there observe, "though now perspicuous, were obscure at their first revelation, lest the communication of the great truth involved in them should let in too much light at once on the unprepared mind." And then, by way of illustration, I suppose, you cite a sentence from a certain Greek writer, in which he endeavours to account for the late use of the

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* *New Eng. Transl. of the first three chapters of Gen. Ch. i. 1.*

term Trinity (Τριας.) Yet the Hebrew terms, of which you are treating in the text, are still as obscure to those for whose use especially they must have been designed, as they ever were; and on the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity, the minds of the Jews have hitherto received no light. But who is this Greek writer, to whose authority an appeal is here made? Your reference stands thus: *Joseph. ap. Phot.—Joseph.* can, of course, be no other than Josephus, and *Josephus ap. Phot.* can be no other than the Jewish historian, from whose works Photius has made some extracts. The term Τριας, used by Josephus, struck me immediately as not a little extraordinary; and though I knew that some Christian Fathers had tampered with his works, I felt persuaded from my recollection of the passages cited by the author of the *Myriobiblon*, that the term had not been foisted into any of them. Not being wholly unacquainted with the learned Patriarch's work, a little search discovered to me the real author,—one *Jobius*, a monk of the sixth century, distinguished by his fanciful defence of the orthodox doctrine. I will allow what, I fear, you would not, in similar circumstances, grant to a Unitarian writer, that this wrong reference was the consequence, not of design, but of inadvertence; but there is something so imposing and so misleading to an unwary reader, in the connexion of *plural Hebrew terms*, as names of God, the *Trinity*, and *Josephus, a Jewish writer*, known to be contemporary with the apostles, that I could not suffer the error, trifling as it may perhaps be thought by some, to pass unnoticed and uncorrected.

With respect to such phrases as *Let us make man, Let us go down*, &c. it is much easier to call the Unitarian mode of explaining them "a gratuitous hypothesis," than

to prove it so. We have the evidence of the Scriptures themselves, that this plural form was sometimes used instead of the singular; as in Job xviii. 2, 3; Cant. i. 4; 2 Sam. xvi. 20, &c. We also find, that in correspondence with their own conceptions, or by way of accommodation to the conceptions of mankind in general, the sacred writers frequently speak of the *council of God*, and represent the Governor of the world as surrounded by his ministers or courtiers, and holding consultations with them. (See 2 Kings iii. 14, 21; Job xv. 8, xxix. 4; Jer. xxiii. 17, 18; and particularly 1 Kings xxii. 19—24, and Is. vi.) Such phrases, therefore, as the above, we think ourselves fully warranted in understanding as a mere figure of speech, and not to be taken literally, or as signifying "that God spake to some beings included in his own nature and substance." Several Trinitarian expositors have thought the same; *

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* Every one knows how strictly the doctrine of the divine Unity is maintained by the followers of Mahommed; and yet it is very common for God to speak of himself in the plural number, as *We* did, *We* gave, *We* commanded, *We are nearer* than the jugular vein, Surely *We created* every thing in proportion. "Mahommed cannot be supposed to have employed a mode of expression, which he could have supposed capable of being considered favourable to the Trinity." For this last remark, and for two of the passages from the Koran which preceded it, I am indebted to a most interesting and able work by the celebrated Brahmin Rammohun Roy, intitled *Second Appeal to the Christian Public, in defence of 'the Precepts of Jesus;'* printed at Calcutta in 1821, and lately reprinted, with his other tracts, in London: a work which, though written by a native of India, and a recent convert to Christianity, discovers a most accurate acquaintance with the English language; and a knowledge of the sacred Scriptures, and a skill in the interpretation of them, excelled by few professed theologians; while, at the same time, it proves that the intelligent and amiable author has, with the doctrine of the gospel, largely imbibed its spirit. This extraordinary man seems destined by Divine Providence to be the instrument of extensive good in the Indian Peninsula, not only by destroying

and amongst them, the great reformer, Luther himself. How have these phrases been understood by the Jews? They never thought of giving to them the Trinitarian interpretation. And is it probable or possible that the doctrine of the Trinity should be contained in such expressions, and that they to whom the oracles of God were for so many ages exclusively intrusted, and "who surely well understood the idioms of their own language," (p. 15,) should yet be ignorant of it. That surely must be a weak argument for this doctrine, which several Trinitarians, most competent to judge of its validity, have rejected; and which was never discovered by those to whom the writings on which it is founded, were given in their own tongue, and for the express purpose of imparting to them the knowledge of the true God. *

You go on to inquire, (p. 14,) "Why are the Names, and Attributes, and Works, and Worship of the Divinity,

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the attachment of his countrymen to their idolatrous and pernicious superstitions, but by preparing them to receive the doctrine, and to hear and obey 'the precepts of Jesus.' Of the aid of this learned Brahmin, and of the very able and zealous Baptist Missionary, Mr. Adam, who has lately abandoned the doctrine of the Trinity, as the first fruits of the Brahmin's labours, as well as of the humbler, but most exemplary exertions of Wm. Roberts, Unitarians, it is hoped, will speedily avail themselves, and thus wipe off the reproach of listlessness in the cause of the unenlightened heathen, so industriously cast upon them by their more active orthodox brethren. From Calcutta and Madras a voice now loudly calls "Come over and help us;" and the call will, I trust, be speedily and effectually answered.

* Dicit ergo FACIAMUS, non tanquam ullius alterius ope ad hanc rem indigeret, sed *hominum more*. Cum enim hominibus haec scribantur, non potuit Deus loquens induci nisi hominum more. Nec Deo alibquin sermo proprie tribui potest. Pro Trinitate oportet ex locis evidentibus Judaeos urgere."—*Mercerus ad Gen.* i. 26.

ascribed to a certain character, appearing upon different occasions throughout the Old Testament; and more particularly appropriated by the Prophets, in almost every variety of application, to the Messiah?" In answer to this inquiry, I must be permitted to say, Produce the passages; prove that such things as belong to the true God, are ascribed to any other than to Jehovah, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the reason shall be given. I know that passages, supposed to be of this character, have been produced; and I also know that they have been explained by learned Unitarian writers, in strict consistency with their principles, and according to the legitimate rules of scriptural interpretation. You may have passages in view, that have not been before cited and explained; though, considering how closely you have, in general, followed other orthodox writers, I can hardly think it probable: if you have, let them appear; and I may, without presumption, assure you they shall be shewn to furnish no proof of the doctrine of the Trinity. Permit me here, also, to ask you, how it happened that the Jews had no expectation of such a Messiah, as you assert was the subject of ancient prophecy? Trypho, in the Dialogue between him and Justin Martyr, certainly spake the sentiment of all the ancient Jews, when he said, that all his nation expected the Messiah to be a man born like other men.* Had they found the Attributes of Divinity appropriated by the Prophets, in almost every variety of application, to the

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* Το γαρ λεγειν σε, προϋπαρχειν Θεον οντα προ αιωνων τουτον τον Χριστον, ειτα και γεγενθηναι ανθρωπον γενομενον ὑπομενειναι, και ὁτι ουκ ανθρωπος εξ ανθρωπου, ου μονον παραδοξον δοκει μοι ειναι, αλλα και μωρον.....Και γαρ παντες ἡμεις τον Χριστον ανθρωπον εξ ανθρωπων προσδοκωμεν γενησεσθαι. κ. τ. λ.—*Just. Mart. Dial. c. Tryph. Edit. Thirlb.* p. 233—5.

Messiah, such would not have beeen their expectation; nor would they have been offended, as you suppose them to have been, with Jesus, for *making himself God.* Your own Allix and others, have laboured hard to wring out something like modern orthodoxy, from the writings of Targumists, Rabbins, and Cabalists, but they have "spent their labour for that which satisfieth not."

Again you ask, "Among numberless other passages in the New Testament, involving the same irresistible conclusion, why do we find united, not only in the Baptismal Formula prescribed by our Saviour himself, but also in the Apostolic Benediction addressed by St. Paul to the Corinthians, the names of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, without the slightest hint of imparity; and in the latter instance, indeed, in a disturbed order, as if in mockery of the foreseen cavils of coming generations?" When you talk of *numberless passages* in the New Testament, involving the irresistible conclusion of the doctrine of the Trinity, (for this I suppose to be your meaning,) your language is somewhat hyperbolical, and you display more of the orator than the divine. Several passages, I know, are cited to prove the pre-existence and Deity of Christ; a few to prove the Personality and Deity of the Holy Spirit; but I have hitherto always understood that there are very few from which it is pretended that the doctrine of the Trinity can be clearly deduced: and since that doctrine has been disbelieved by some, in every age of the Church, there can be none which involve the irresistible conclusion, that there is a Trinity of Persons in the Godhead. I exceedingly regret, that out of these numberless passages of which you speak, you have produced only two: these, of

course, you have selected as most decisive; yet if I am not greatly mistaken, they are little to the purpose.

I might justly question the propriety of denominating the first of them the *Baptismal Formula*, since there is not an instance on record, of its having been ever used in the apostolic age. Converts appear from the history in the *Acts of the Apostles*, to have been uniformly baptized into the name of *Christ only*.* I allow, indeed, that this was perfectly equivalent; but if the words used by our Lord, were indeed a form prescribed by himself, would the apostles and evangelists have ventured to depart from it? This fact shews that the first preachers of the Gospel did not consider these words in the light in which you place them; nor attach to them the same degree of importance. To baptize *into* or *concerning* (εις) the name of Christ, implied, as I understand the nature and design of the rite, the baptizing *into* or *concerning* "the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit;" but this did by no means lead to the irresistible conclusion that the Godhead comprehended three Persons. Had it done so, as all who

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* A former Archdeacon of Cleveland, who was not easily led away by the mere sound of words, nor accustomed to take slight and superficial views of any subject that engaged his attention, felt it a great difficulty to account for this deviation. His method of solving it was ingenious, but may not be generally thought satisfactory. "Suppose then," he observes, "we should read the passage thus, Πορευθεντες ουν μαθητευσατε παντα τα εθνη (βαπτιζοντες αυτους) εις το ονομα του Πατρος κ. τ. λ. Go ye, therefore, and disciple all nations (baptizing them,) into the name of the Father, &c."—*Archd. Blackburne's Works*, vol. i. p. lxxxvii. They who know any thing of the writings and character of the author of the Confessional, will be somewhat surprised to learn that the most which one of his successors can say of him, is, that he believes him "to have been individually, a well-intentioned, though greatly mistaken man"!!

were converted were baptized, the Christian church would, from the first, have consisted of those only who believed the doctrine of the Trinity; especially, if we are to understand this formula (p. 46) as at the same time a creed. But was this the case? Were all the ancient Christians Trinitarians? If you assert that they were, I affirm, and am ready to prove, that it is in contradiction to the whole tenour of the most ancient writings of the Church. If you allow that they were not, then what is the irresistible conclusion involved in the formula, or how can we imagine that it teaches a doctrine which the majority of Christians (*major pars credentium**) could not, till many ages had past, be persuaded to embrace?

Baptism was, I apprehend, an initiatory rite, arising out of opinions and practices generally prevalent in ancient times, and in eastern countries, and out of Jewish principles and practices in particular; uniformly implying and denoting that the persons who submitted to the rite, were considered as fit to be received either by the baptizer, or by persons authorized by him, to further instruction in the doctrine he had to teach. They who believed the word of the apostles, were to be baptized, in order that they might be instructed; and the subjects of instruction are distinctly marked out by our Lord, when he delivers to the apostles the commission under which they were to act. These subjects were "the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit;" in other words, GOD, in the character of the Father of Jesus, as the Being by whom he was instructed for his mission and sent into the world: JESUS, in the character of the Son of God, the expected Messiah, and one duly taught and commissioned by the Father: and the HOLY SPIRIT,

* *Tert. adv. Prax.*

those supernatural powers first bestowed upon Jesus, as an evidence that God had sent him; then promised by him to his disciples, and since poured forth upon them, to prove the reality of his resurrection, ascension, and exaltation, and the means of confirming their word to that and every future generation. *

I know of no other sense that the words of our Lord will bear; and thus interpreted, they harmonize with the whole strain of the preaching of the apostles, and of their epistles. Thus interpreted, we can easily understand how the baptizing into the name of Christ, instead of into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, was from the first adopted in the Christian Church; since every convert received to instruction, on the subject of Jesus, must necessarily be taught the relation which God held to Jesus, as his Father; the relation which Jesus held

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* "Is it not worth noticing," you ask in a note, (p. 62,) "that the unity of the Three Persons here mentioned, may be indicated by the use of the singular ονομα, *name*—not ονοματα, *names*"? I should say it is not worth noticing. Supposing Three *Persons* to be denoted by the following terms, the ellipsis of ονομα before the last two, might be easily supplied: but the truth is, that ονομα here, as in many other places, is merely idiomatic, adding nothing to the sense of its adjuncts, and may be wholly disregarded. So Schleusner understands it in this place. "In *N. T. haud raro abundare solet*, v. c. Matth. xxviii. 19, βαπτιζοντες εις το ονομα του πατρος· και τ. λ. pro εις τον πατερα, και τον υιον, και το αγιον πνευμα. Coll. Rom. vi. 3, et Galat. iii. 17. Adde 1 Cor. i. 13, et 15."—It is worth noticing, for the consideration of those who lay so much stress upon this baptismal formula, as it is called, that the Jews are said by Paul to have been baptized into Moses; εις τον Μωϋσην. 1 Cor. x. 2. And that the Jews themselves say of the Samaritans, that they were circumcised, *in* or *upon the name of Mount Gerizim*. לשם הר גריזים *Schaigen. Hor. Hebr:* tom. i. p. 239. This last fact may serve to shew that the being baptized into the name of an Attribute, is not so absurd a supposition, as to be met by a sneer. (Charge, p. 62.)

to God, as his Son; and also concerning the supernatural powers, by which the divine mission of Jesus had been confirmed, and with which the apostles, in the fulfilment of his promise, had been endowed. You may dispute the interpretation which removes one stay of Trinitarianism; but I am confident you cannot disprove it.

The apostolic benediction to which you refer, is, I suppose, that which we meet with in 2 Cor. xiii. 14;—"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all." If we are to infer, from the union of these names in this benediction, and in the baptismal formula, the Unity of three Persons in one God-head, what are we to infer from 1 Sam. xii. 18, where we are told, that "all the people greatly feared the Lord and Samuel;" or from 1 Chron. xxix. 20, where it is said, that "all the congregation bowed down their heads, and worshipped the Lord and the king;" or from Acts xv. 28, where the apostles say, "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us;" or from Rev. i. 4, where the writer thus salutes the seven churches: "Grace be unto you, and peace from him who is, and who was, and who is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;" or lastly, which is still more to our purpose, from 1 Tim. v. 21, where Paul charges his son in the Gospel, "before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels"?

Or, again; if the union of the *three* names involves the irresistible conclusion, that they are three Persons in one Godhead, what does the union of only *two* of them, the form we most commonly meet with, involve? Is it possible that the Holy Spirit should have been so frequently

omitted, had it been conceived of as a Divine Person, co-equal with the Father and the Son? And again, permit me to ask you, what are we to understand by the term *God*, in the benediction to which you appeal so triumphantly? When that term, God, occurs, without any other, such as Father, to limit its signification, is it not understood by you, to signify a Being consisting of the three Persons,—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? There may be some faint show of plausibility in the argument, when the terms Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are united; but *Jesus*, and *God*, and the *Holy Spirit*, seem brought together by the apostle, to apply your own language, "as if in mockery of the foreseen" errors "of coming generations." It is not the order merely, but the sense that is disturbed: for if, according to your system, *God* is a term equivalent to *Trinity*, the apostolic benediction may be read thus:—The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. But is it possible to conceive, that this is a just representation of the apostle's meaning? Irresistible, indeed, must be the conclusion, when such passages are fully examined, that they contain no proof whatever of the doctrine which they are cited to support.

You next ask, (p. 15,) "Why, with more especial reference to the Second Person of the Trinity, do we read that *the Word*, which was *made flesh, and dwelt among us, was God, even God over all, blessed for ever?*" Where, let me also ask, do we read, that 'the Word was God over all blessed for ever?' Paul, from whom this last phrase is cited, (Rom. ix. 4,) never once speaks of *the Word*; and we Unitarians maintain, that it is not even of Jesus, the Preacher of the Word, that he here speaks; but of that Great Being,

whom he elsewhere calls *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed for evermore*, (2 Cor. xi. 31,) and to whom he ascribes praise for the benefits conferred first in the Jewish, and afterwards in the Christian, dispensation. We assert, and not without the support of some eminent Trinitarians, as Erasmus, Bucer, and Le Clerc, that the clause ought to be considered as a doxology, and rendered, '*He who is God over all, be blessed for ever!*' And we are further justified in not referring this clause to Christ, by the language of Christian antiquity; since it is well known that it was anciently represented as a branch of the Gnostic heresy, to affirm Christ to be "the God over all;" * since "Origen † calls it *rashness* (which he would not have done, had he thought it to be the doctrine of St. Paul,) to suppose Christ to be the God over all, as inconsistent with his words, 'my Father is greater than I;' and even Eusebius, in all his books against Marcellus, lays it down as the constant, known doctrine of the Church, that Christ himself is not ὁ ἐπὶ πασιν Θεος, and ὁ ἐπεκεινα των ὁλων Θεος, 'the God over all;' but that these are the peculiar titles of the Father: and he particularly affirms, that whoever applies these titles to the Son, *cannot be a pious person.*" ‡ When John says, as it is acknowledged he does, that *the Word was God*, or, rather, that *God was the Word*, we cannot admit, without better proof than has yet been given, that it is with any "re-

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* *Apost. Const.* lib. 6, c. 26. *Ignat. Epist. ad Tars.* §. 5.

† Ἐγω δε, τινας ὡς εν πληθει πιστευοντων, και δεχομενων διαφωνιαν, δια την προπετειαν ὑποτιθεσθαι τον Σωτηρα ειναι τον επι πασι Θεον· αλλ' ουτι γε ἡμεις τοιουτον, ὁι πειθομενοι αυτῳ λεγοντι, Ὁ πατηρ, ὁ πεμψας με, μειζων μου εστι.—*Contr. Cels.* lib. viii. p. 387, edit. Cant. 1677.

‡ *Letters to a Protestant Divine, &c. by another Barrister*, 2d edit. p. 173. A Work which contains *an unanswered*, and I will venture to say, an *unanswerable* defence of Unitarianism.

ference to the Second Person of the Trinity." It is true, that Unitarian expositors are not agreed in their method of interpreting this passage; and it may also be true, that none of the methods adapted by them, are free from serious objections; yet, I maintain, that the most objectionable is, to say the least, as plausible, and as free from absurdities and contradictions, and as conformable with the general usage of Scripture language, as any proposed by orthodox interpreters. The sneers in which you have so freely indulged, (p. 62, 63,) are little becoming in one who, if I may use the term, explains this passage in such a manner, as to make the evangelist declare, 'that God was with God; that a pure, eternal, omnipresent Spirit was made a man; that He, whom no man hath seen, was seen, and looked upon, and handled; (comp. 1 John, i. 1.;) that God was his own Son, and was in the bosom of the Father; and that he who was in the beginning, *i. e.* from all eternity, was begotten.' I am not prepared to defend the modern Unitarian interpretation, which makes the Logos an attribute, for I disapprove it; but it certainly does not involve such palpable absurdities as that which you call the "more intelligible commentary, and the brief and obvious interpretation of the Church of England." But I might, perhaps, ask, Is this the interpretation of the Church of England? for I do not find that all her sons agree in their comments. Are we to judge of her views respecting this passage, as she declared them by the mouth of Dr. Daniel Waterland, in the year 1719, at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, London; or as she afterwards declared them, in the years 1764-5, at the very same place, by the mouth of Dr. Benjamin Dawson? If we listen to her first oracle, we shall be told, that "*In the beginning*, before there was any *creature*, (consequently from all eternity,) the Word existed; and the Word was no dis-

tant, separate Power, estranged from God, or unacquainted with Him; but he was *with God*, and Himself also, *very God:* not another God, but *another Person* only, of the same nature, substance, and God-head." But if we attend to the other, we shall learn, that such is not the meaning of the evangelist, but that *the Word* is *the Gospel.* "This was, John tells us, from God himself; for that *in the beginning*, before *it* was published to the world, it *was with God; God was the Word*, the original Author and Giver of it." * Which of these are we to regard as the dictate of the Church of England? As you refer to some intelligible commentary, it cannot be the first; I would gladly persuade myself, therefore, that you mean the latter; as this commentary, proceeding from the Metropolitan Church, is nearly

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* Others than can *jar* (p. 62) in their interpretations of this, besides the adversaries of the Church of England; and I think I might say, but that I greatly dislike such language, that others can employ *verbiage* in their comments. Nor is the crime of being diffuse confined to Unitarian critics. "Upon these first fourteen verses of St. John, in the author alluded to," (the late Mr. Cappe,) you tauntingly observe, "is founded a paraphrase of nearly six, and notes exceeding ninety full octavo pages!" But to what extent would Dr. Daniel Waterland have proceeded, had he continued his Discourses through all these fourteen verses, when the consideration of the first three extends to one hundred and twelve pages? His labours, according to this proportion, would have been *diffused* through upwards of five hundred. Such a method of depreciating the work of a learned, laborious, and patient critic, is utterly unworthy of a scholar, who can be no stranger to lengthened disquisitions on passages of comparative insignificance, in the writings of ancient Greece and Rome. But the reputation of Mr. Cappe, though a Sectarian, is not to be blasted by a sneer, or destroyed by an *Ohe jam satis est!* We do not *brag*, though we confidently assert, that we can give our creed in the very language of the Scriptures; and our "huge tomes" would have no existence, were we not under the painful necessity of continually repelling objections "that have been over and over again refuted;" and of preparing against attacks, that we know will be renewed, though a thousand times repulsed.

the same that I have long been accustomed, as a Unitarian, to maintain.

If I do not enter further into the explanation of this important passage, with which the Gospel of John is introduced, it is not because I find any difficulty in proving that it does not teach the doctrine of the Trinity; but because the just interpretation certainly depends upon an accurate knowledge of the design of the evangelist, in the subsequent part of his Gospel, and of the peculiarities of his style; and these things cannot be stated, without extending too far the limits of this publication.

"Why do we read," you further ask, "that *in him dwelt all the fulness of the God-head bodily?*" I might answer by another question,—Why did the apostle pray, (Eph. iii. 19,) that the disciples at Ephesus *might be filled with all the fulness of God?* Or, why, immediately after the words you have cited, does he tell the Colossians, (ch. ii. 10,) that they *are filled* (πεπληρωμενοι) *in him*, as his disciples, or *by him*, from his fulness? It neither suits the connexion, nor is it agreeable to the general usage of the terms here used by the apostle, to understand him as speaking of the Divine essence. By *the fulness of the God-head dwelling in Christ*, he evidently means 'the knowledge of the Divine will, and all the spiritual blessings he had received of the Father, and which he was empowered by him to communicate to the members of his spiritual body, the church.' And when he says, that "this fulness dwelt in Him *bodily*," he meant that it dwelt in him *truly* and *really*, or substantially. In other words, the Christian dispensation is complete and substantial, whereas the Mosaic dispensation (with which the apostle is here contrasting it) was imperfect and shadowy. (Comp.

ver. 17. *)—Let it be further observed, that whatever this fulness of the God-head may have been, it pleased the Father that it should dwell in Christ, who must therefore be considered as an inferior and dependent Being, and not the true God.——Again, you inquire, Why do we read, that *He had power to forgive sins, (and who can forgive sins but God only?)* But do we not find Aaron thus intreating Moses, on behalf of himself and his sister: 'Alas, my lord, I beseech thee, lay not the sin upon us, wherein we have done foolishly, and wherein we have sinned'? (Num. xii. 11.) And Saul, thus addressing Samuel, "I have sinned; for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and thy words: now therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin'? (1 Sam. xv. 24.) Did not Jesus authorize his apostles to forgive sin, when he said to them, 'Whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted to them'? (John xx. 23.) And do not you imagine that you possess the same power, when you solemnly declare to the dying penitent, 'By the authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins, in the name of the Father,' &c.? But you appear to me, to have mistaken the import of our Lord's words, in the transaction to which the passage you have cited, belongs, and to have been led astray by the malicious cavils of the Jewish Scribes. Nothing, surely, can be better known, than that the Jews considered disease to be the consequence

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* Rosenmuller, an orthodox interpreter, thus renders the text:—*Nam ipsi insunt omnes thesauri sapientiæ divinæ revera.* And he remarks, *Genitivus Θεοτητος* h, l. non intelligitur de ipsâ naturâ Dei, tanquam de eo quod habitet in aliquo, sed de illo quod sit a Deo profectum, ab eoque originem ducat. *Σωματικως vere, re ipsa.*" In a similar manner, this text, now regarded as one of the strong holds of orthodoxy, was understood by Chrysostom and Augustin, amongst the ancients; by Erasmus and others, amongst the moderns.

of sin; and the curing of the disease, an indication that the sin was forgiven; agreeable to the parellelism in Ps. ciii. 3, "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases." Our Lord's own words, in ver. 5, 6, afford a sufficient answer to your inquiry, as they did to the malicious question of his enemies; and shew that he assumed the power of forgiving sins, no further than by removing diseases, the temporal punishment of them. Permit me to remind you of Bp. Pearce's Commentary on Matt. ix. 2, 6.—— The next passage to which you refer, is John v. 21: *As the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.* Whatever may be the power of the exercise of which our Lord here speaks, (for no one, I think, who attentively considers the whole chapter, can hesitate to say, that it is very doubtful,) it is not an independent power: for he declares, more than once, as if foreseeing the wrong notions that might prevail concerning him, that of himself he can do nothing. And even in the very words you have quoted, I conceive that he owns his subordination: for I feel very well persuaded, that ὑς θελει signifies 'whom *the Father* wills.'——Again you ask, Why do we read that '*as the Father knew Him, even so knew He the Father.* If you mean, as I suppose you do, to insinuate that the nature of Christ is as incomprehensible as the nature of the Father, and that therefore he is God, it is evident that you have paid no attention to the context, or to the scriptural meaning of the word *to know*, on which your inquiry depends. 'I am the good shepherd,' says our Lord, 'and know my *sheep*, and am known by mine; *even* as the Father knoweth me, and *as* I know the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep."* But *to know* signifies *to*

* See Abp. Newcome's Translation of John x. 14, 15, who has followed the punctuation of some of the most judicious critics.

*love.** Our Lord therefore means, 'I love my sheep, and am loved by them, even as the Father loveth me, and I love the Father.' (See Grotius, Hammond, Whitby, &c. &c.)—— Then you ask, Why we read that *all men should honour Him* (the Son) *even as they honour the Father.* We have it on your own authority, "that the word translated 'even as,'† frequently denotes, not equality, but such an analogy (in many cases far from complete) as the character of the things spoken of admits."‡ This may be one of the cases, if, by *honouring*, we are to understand 'paying religious service and reverence.' But I apprehend that is not the meaning of the term in this place. All that our Lord intends to say, is, 'That all men should receive his doctrine as the word of God, and honour him as the holy Prophet of the Most High.' The words that he spake were not his own, but the Father's who sent him: they who heard him were bound, therefore, to listen as reverently to those words, as they would to the voice of God addressing them from heaven. To disregard him was no other than to disregard and dishonour God. §——Why, finally you ask, do we read, that *He is the true God, and eternal life?* I deny that we do read this, as predicated of Jesus Christ. Our common version

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* Γινωσκω *agnosco aliquem meum esse, et ad me pertinere*, et ex adjuncto: *magnifacio, revereor, amo, beneficiis afficio.*—John x. 14.—Amo meos sectatores, &c. 15, 17.—*Schleusner. Lex. in verb.*

† The remark is certainly as applicable to καθως, as to ωσπερ.

‡ *Archd. Wrangham's Sermon, preached in the Cathedral Church of St. Peter's*, March 16, 1823, p. 5.

§ A similar interpretation is more briefly given by Schleusner: "Ut omnes doctrinam, a filio traditam, eadem religione amplectantur et habeant, qua divinam; illam enim qui respuit, impius est in Deum, auctorem ejus."—*Lex. in v.* τιμαω.

(1 John v. 20) is, "This is the true God and eternal life."* And the pronoun "This," refers not to the nearest, but to a remoter antecedent, "Him that is true:" just as in Epist. 2, 7. "This is a deceiver," refers not to Jesus Christ, the last antecedent, but to one of the "many deceivers," at the beginning of the verse. The true God, is not Jesus Christ, but that Being whom he hath given his disciples understanding to know. The declaration of the evangelist is the same as that of his divine Master—"This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." See John xvii. 3.

You proceed to ask, "Why is he charged by his Jewish enemies, who surely well understood the idioms of their own language, with having *made himself God*, when he pronounced that *He and his Father were one?*" If by *being one* with the Father, be meant, having an hypostatical union with him, so as with him, to constitute one God, the apostles, by whom, I imagine, the idioms of their own language were well known, must have been greatly astonished, when they heard their Master pray that 'they might be one, as he and the Father were.' (John xvii. 11.) And much more, when he added, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also, who shall believe in me through their word; *That they all may be one;* as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, *that they also may be one in us:* And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them; *that they may*

* The common version of this passage is by no means correct. The following is Abp. Newcome's: "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true; and we are in Him that is true, through his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and everlasting life." His notes on this passage are excellent and convincing.

*be one, even as we are one:* I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." * But they expressed no astonishment; and probably they felt none. Nothing, indeed, can be more evident, if we are to make Scripture its own interpreter, than that our Lord means no more by this union of the Father and himself, than unity of purpose and operation, in promoting the scheme of the Gospel. Granting that the Jews did charge our Lord with making himself God, because he said that He and his Father were one, what have we to do with their opinions, or their cavils? In several other cases, we see, that under the influence of prejudice and malice, they perverted the plainest words, and acted contrary to the manifest conviction of their own minds. But the truth is, that it was not that saying of our Lord which, in this instance, occasioned their cavil, but his having called God, as they may have thought, or as they pretended to think, in some peculiar way, *his Father*. And he accordingly, with more condescension than they deserved, argued the case with them; and on the ground of the idiom of their own language, according to which, magistrates are called *Gods*, maintains

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* Archdeacon Blackburne seems to have understood this language better than his present successor. For he observes, "This Unity of the Father and the Son, must either be an *Unity of agreement, concord*, or *communion*; or the Unity of the apostles, must be a *Unity of Godhead*."—*Notes on a Paper, &c. by Dr. Sharpe.*— *Works*, vol. I. p. 353. These Notes, written, perhaps, when he "wavered on points of doctrine," contain several remarks, well worthy the attention of orthodox Churchmen.—The most orthodox of the ancient Fathers, as Tertullian, Novatian, and even Basil, explain the words in the same manner. And Calvin himself says, "Abusi sunt hoc loco veteres, ut probarent Christum esse Patri ὁμοούσιον: neque enim Christus de Unitate substantiæ disputat, sed de consensu quem cum Patre habet, quicquid scilicet geritur a Christo, Patris virtute confirmatum iri."—See *Calm Inquiry*, p. 150, 2d edit.

that he is not chargeable with blasphemy, sanctified and sent into the world as he had been, by the Father, because he had called himself the Son of God. The whole passage is, indeed, decidedly in favour of the Unitarian doctrine.—Again you ask, "Why does the Father address him, *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever?*" I do not acknowledge the correctness of this version, but maintain that both in the place from which you have cited the words, Heb. i. 8, and in the Psalm (xlv.) from which it is taken, the passage should be rendered "*God is thy throne*, i. e. the support of thy throne, *for ever and ever.*"* But allowing the correctness of the common version, these words were addressed originally to Solomon; and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, applying them to Christ, adds, "therefore *God, even thy God, hath anointed thee.*" So that if he has given to Jesus Christ in this passage, the appellation of God, "he has left no reasonable ground for doubt, that he did not use that appellation in reference to *nature*, but merely to *dignity* and *office.*"—*Carpenter's View*, &c. p. 155.—You next inquire, "Why does he himself assert, *I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again?*" You should, in fairness, have added the next clause, *This command-*

* In this I am justified by several eminent interpreters, and amongst them, by a distinguished ornament of the English Church, Dr. A. A. Sykes. *See his Paraphrase on the Hebrews*, ch. i. 8. A late Irish Prelate, Dr. M. Young, Bp. of Clonfert, in his New Translation of the Psalms, has rendered the verse in Ps. xlv. 6, *Thy throne, O Prince, is for ever and ever*, &c. For this, and other *freedoms*, and in particular for the remarks on those Psalms usually interpreted as direct prophecies of the Messiah, this valuable work, by one of the most eminent scholars the University of Dublin has produced, the publication of which he had very much at heart, was, as I am informed, suppressed as soon as printed.

*ment I have received of my Father.* (John x. 18.) It was, therefore, no independent power that he exercised; if, indeed, he really asserts that he exercised any. For as the apostles, whenever they speak of the resurrection of their Master, which is frequently, never ascribe that event to any exertion of his own power, but uniformly to the immediate agency of God, his Father, we seem required to understand the original word translated *power*, as signifying *authority*, or *privilege*; and our Lord's declaration, as comprehending no more than that having willingly submitted to the death of the cross, he should have the privilege of being raised again. He might have preserved his life, but like a good shepherd, he contentedly resigned it, for the benefit of his sheep: therefore his Father loved him, and granted to him the privilege, which no one else had enjoyed, of being recovered from the stroke of death, to die no more. Had our Lord intended, by these words, to say, that he should raise himself from the dead, his apostles must have thus understood them; and their minds must have been so deeply impressed by this wonderful exertion of power, that they could not have suppressed all mention of it in their Discourses and Epistles. Yet in nothing that they either said or wrote, does the slightest hint of this appear. The uniform tenor of their language, respecting the resurrection of their Master is, "*This Jesus hath God raised up.*" In the words of our Lord, in this single passage, there may be some obscurity; in all the numerous passages in which the apostles speak of his resurrection, referring it solely to the power of his God and Father, there is none. Now it is an admitted rule of interpretation, that obscure and difficult places are to be explained by those that are clear and easy. Guided by this rule, Unitarians can give a reasonable and a scriptural answer to your inquiry, concerning this much controverted

passage. *—"Why, in fine," you ask, "did his followers crave, and bestow from him *grace and peace*, and all other spiritual blessings?" The passages to which I suppose you refer, when properly examined, will appear to be no more than devout wishes, expressed by the apostles on behalf of their converts, that all the benefits of the gospel of Christ, and all the comfort and the joy of believing might be their's. They cannot be regarded as direct prayers to Jesus, since the apostles could not fail to observe the solemn injunction he had given them just before his death:—"In that day," *i. e.* when I shall have finally left this world, "ye shall ask me nothing, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give *it* you." At the same time, it is evident that during the apostolical age, our Lord enjoyed extraordinary powers, or, at least, was often employed as the agent by whom God dispensed the blessings of the Gospel. He was with the disciples, either by occasionally appearing to them, or in the gifts of the Spirit, after his ascension, till "the end of the age." By this circumstance, the language of the apostles was materially influenced; but as the privilege which both Jesus and his church thus enjoyed, was by the will and the appointment of the Father, the apostles never ascribe to their Master any independent authority, nor either "crave or bestow any blessing from him, but as the Mediator between God and man. †

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* A very able examination of Abp. Magee's Strictures on the Unitarian interpretation of this passage, may be found in *Dr. Carpenter's Reply to Magee. Appx.* p. 383.

† In a Note (p. 29) we are referred to a "Series of texts to be drawn from the *Improved* Version itself, (though," it is observed, "the Editors make some

And are these the "numerous and decisive texts," by which the cause of Trinitarianism is to be firmly established? On the strength of evidence derived from these, do you exclaim, "Away, then, with the daring dogma, that strips the Gospel of the diety of its Founder?" I am not conscious of having used any "artifice to fritter them away;" if I have, let me be held up to merited reprobation: but, on principles of sound criticism, I hope I have shewn that they are utterly inadequate to the purpose for which you have cited them.—"As a counterbalance to these" you tell your clergy, who, if they were at all acquainted with the works of Unitarian writers, must have heard you with some degree of astonishment, that "a few passages are brought forward, where Christ is represented as commissioned by the Father, as praying to him, and as acknowledging his superiority." A few passages! No, Sir, not a

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clumsy efforts, in their Notes to evade the obvious conclusions) powerfully confirming the doctrines of the Established Church." These texts follow the readings of Griesbach, and differ from the Common Version. They are, Acts xvi. 7. *The Spirit* of Jesus.—Rom. xv. 29. *The blessing* of Christ.—Eph. v. 21. *The fear* of Christ.—Col. iii. 15. *The peace of* Christ.—2 Thess. ii. 8. Jesus *shall consume.* And it is asked, "Do not these all concur in ascribing to our blessed Saviour an exuberance of grace and goodness, a plenitude of authority, an irresistible universality of influence, which (in the judgment of unprejudiced reason) are totally incompatible with the powers of any other, than the infinite Being?". To this I answer, No. All these passages, and all others like them, are capable of being explained, and fairly explained, upon just principles of interpretation, in perfect consistency with the doctrine, that Jesus was a finite Being. The *efforts* of the Editors of the Improved Version, are confined to two of the five passages, and I can perceive nothing *clumsy* in them. The notes are very brief, and coincide with those of Rosenmuller, and some other learned and judicious critics. Want of room and time, not any apprehended difficulty, prevents me from attending more particularly to these texts.

few passages: even those to which you immediately refer are many, and besides those, we produce whole books—the general strain and tenor of the Scriptures from Genesis to the Apocalypse. We say, andwe think that we can prove it, and that we do prove it, that it is uniformly and plainly the language of the Old Testament, that there is but one God, Jehovah, the same who, in the New Testament, is called the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ; and that the same doctrine is that of every book of the New Testament; maintained and taught by Jesus himself, and, in the most express terms, by his apostles. * We affirm that the doctrine of the Trinity is not taught in any single passage, that it is inferred only from very few; and that the doctrine of the deity of the Founder of Christianity, depends also upon a few scattered texts, separated from their connexion, and interpreted without a just regard to idioms of speech, and the circumstances of the primitive church.—But you go on to say, (p. 16,) of the counterbalancing passages, which you are pleased to reckon so few, that you find in them no difficulty; you have "an hypothesis, upon which alone the apparent discrepancy of these texts is perfectly harmonised." You have "a theory," which, "in short, (to borrow an expressive metaphor,) is a key, which fits all the wards of this seemingly intricate lock, turns among them with hardly a touch of interruption, catches and acts upon every bolt, and lays open to us, in

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* A very curious, faithful, and instructive "Summary View of the Evidence of each book in the New Testament, in favour of the principal opinions respecting the Person of Jesus Christ," may be seen in *Dr. Carpenter's View of the Scriptural Grounds of Unitarianism.* An inspection of this Table, will immediately shew which is the opinion that has the sanction of only a few texts.

the easiest manner, the treasures of divine truth." In plain language, you assume that Jesus Christ possessed two natures, a human and a divine; and when any action or saying of his, inconsistent with the doctrine of his deity, is urged upon you, its force is evaded, by its being referred to his human nature. Are we told that he grew in wisdom, and in favour with God; that he was exposed to temptation; that he was subject to sinless infirmities; that he prayed in the temple and in the synagogues with his disciples, and in solitude; that he refused to be called good, because that title belonged only to God; and that he declared he knew not the day nor the hour of the approaching visitation of Judæa: all these, with whatever else may appear to indicate that he was a man like other men, are to be referred to one portion only of his nature, and to be regarded as proving no more than that he was man as well as God. Your hypothesis is gratuitous; your theory rests upon no foundation; your key is no more than a picklock, which forces the bolts, by bending and breaking the wards. Is there one passage of Scripture, in which this two-fold nature is attributed to him? Did he afford to those with whom he daily conversed, the slightest hint of this wonderful union of God and man in one person? Have we any reason to believe that such a union was so much as suspected by any with whom he conversed, even by the twelve? When to a certain ruler, who had called him "Good Master," he said "Why callest thou me good? None is good, save one, *that is* God;" did the ruler imagine that this God was then present with him in the person of Jesus? When he told his disciples that "No one knew of that day and hour, not the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father," did they understand him to say, that though he knew it not as man, yet he knew it as God? If it be con-

tended that it was prudent for our Lord to conceal this astonishing fact, that is, to keep those whom he came to seek and to save, in ignorance of a doctrine, the belief of which is now deemed essential to salvation, yet surely, "when the Spirit of truth had come, who was to guide them into all truth," the apostles would be inssructed in this great doctrine, and they would have no reason for concealing it from mankind. Yet where have they taught it? If any where, it must be plainly; it was too momentous to be shadowed out obscurely, and left to be drawn by inference. But they had no such doctrine to teach. They knew it not. Had they known it, it must have appeared in every page of the New Testament. The language, both of Jesus and his apostles, must have been perpetually under its influence. No man, as Jesus is allowed to have been, conscious that he was at the same time God, could have failed to discover that consciousness; nor could any persons relate the actions and discourses, or publish the doctrine of so wonderful and exalted a Being, and refrain from dwelling upon this astonishing union. It is a fiction of later ages, invented to obviate difficulties arising out of the corruptions of sacred truth. But what a fiction! How injurious to the character of Him whom it is designed to honour! If he were indeed God as well as man, his whole conduct was misleading to those about him; and his words, even on the most solemn occasions, were no other than equivocations, and spoken with a disingenuous, mental reservation. "Dr. Stillingfleet, in his Sermon on Matt. x. 16, observes Mr. Emlyn, "speaking of the equivocations of Popish priests, whose common answer, when examined about what they have known by confession, is, that *they know it not*, which they think to vindicate from the charge of lying, by saying, that in confession, the priest knows

matters as God, not as man, and therefore he denies to know them, meaning it as man. But," says the Doctor, "this is absurd; because to say, he does not know, is as much as to say, he does not any way know, which is false, if he does know in any capacity. Now if this be a good answer," adds Mr. Emlyn, "against the Papists, as no doubt it is, then surely it is so in the present case. Therefore, when Christ says he knows not the day of judgment, it is as much as to say he does not any way know it; and consequently, it is a vain shift to say, it was as man only. We must beware, lest we bring the holy Jesus under such a reproach as the Romish priests lie under." * You, Sir,

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* See *Emlyn's Works, vol. i. p. 19*, where are many other very forcible observations on this subject. See also an excellent *Sermon by Dr. W. E. Channing, of Boston, N. America, preached at the Ordination of the Rev. J. Sparks*; a discourse eminently distinguished by its just exposition of scriptural truth, and the clearness and the solidity of the reasoning by which it is supported. This truly eloquent preacher is only one of many who are now successfully labouring to diffuse through the United States, the knowledge of the one only true and living God, as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; and who in their lives adorn the doctrine they profess. The Trans-Atlantic regions present an interesting scene to the lover of truth and of mankind; while the friend of liberty looks to them with satisfaction, as destined by the powerful example of a free and equal government to check the despots of the old world, and to encourage the efforts of enlightened patriotism, the friend of religious truth contemplates there, with unspeakable delight, the unlimited diffusion of pure and uncorrupted Christianity. It was indeed in "something of prophetic strain," that my venerable predecessor, in a Fast Sermon, preached near the close of the American war, looking to the probable ends of those crimes of his native country, which he boldly reproved, and piously lamented, observed that, amongst other things, "it might be in the purposes of divine Providence, on yon western shores, to raise the bulwark of a purer reformation than ever Britain patronised, to erect a seminary for the formation of more liberal minds than the old world ever knew." The prediction is receiving its accomplishment. Unrestrained by prescribed formularies of faith, unimpeded by religious tests,

profess to transcribe with pain, a passage in a Unitarian work, which represents Jesus as subject (*i. e.* as by nature liable) to infirmities and frailties, while at the same time, you boast of a doctrine which necessarily involves a consequence, at which Unitarians shudder, that Jesus was actually guilty of sin. For what is sinful, if falsehood be not; and what is it but falsehood, to conceal the whole truth, in circumstances which mislead the hearer; to equivocate, to speak with mental reservation. Well may it be said in your own words, (p. 29,) "what will not the appetite for system appear to sanction?" You, indeed, do not draw this frightful consequence, or I am persuaded you would at once abandon the doctrine; but I see not how this consequence can be avoided. The Unitarian believer needs no hypothesis, no theory involving a sentiment so dishonourable to the memory of his venerated master. Relying upon his own declaration, that "of himself he could do nothing," but that "the Father who dwelled in him did the works;" and upon that of his inspired apostle, that "Jesus of Nazareth was a MAN, approved of God, by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him," he can satisfactorily account for all the miracles, whether of knowledge or of power, by which his divine commission was proved; and is preserved from the absurdity of believing that an Almighty Personage, *i. e.* God himself, (for who but God is *Almighty?*) was conceived, was born, was ministered to by angels in his necessities, upon Mount

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unawed by the frown of power, unseduced by the splendid emoluments of a wealthy religious establishment, the human mind is there freely expatiating in the search after divine truth, and in the attainments it has already made, receiving the reward of its past labours, and encouragement to proceed with unabating perseverance.

Tabor resumed (what he could never lay aside) the glory of the Godhead, and upon Mount Calvary expired! (Charge, p. 17.) He owns him to have been *much more than a prophet*, but at the same time much less than Almighty God.

There is one topic more, which I cannot suffer to pass without notice, though I cannot enter into it so largely as I wish; namely, your appeal to the Ante-Nicene Fathers. In your Charge, (p. 10,) in the midst of your criminations of Unitarians, and without much regard to connexion, you observe, "I might also, were it necessary, appeal to the Apostolic and other Ante-Nicene Fathers—to *Clement of Rome*, and *Barnabas*, (or whosoever wrote the Epistle under his name,) and *Ignatius*, and *Polycarp*, and *Justin Martyr*, and *Tatian*, and *Irenæus*, and *Athenagoras*, and *Theophilus of Antioch*, and *Clement of Alexandria*, and *Tertullian*, and *Origen*, for abundant confirmations of the doctrine for which I am contending." And in your note, (p. 57—60,) you have given a sprinkling of extracts, in which you assure the unlearned reader, that there is a most entire concurrence, as to the point referred to, the Divinity of Christ. "They are meant, however," you add, "not to establish that point, for"—and here I most cordially agree with you,—"*better foundation can no man lay* than what is already laid in Scripture; but to shew, in opposition to vague and illiterate assertions, that the Ante-Nicene Fathers were *not* Unitarians." Such assertions you may indeed well call vague and illiterate, but who has made them? So far from considering these Fathers as Unitarians, we charge them (with the exception of those denominated apostolic) with being the corrupters of the Unitarian doctrine. All that we contend for is, that they did

not hold the doctrine of the Trinity as it is now professed; that they had no notion of three co-eternal and co-equal Persons, forming one God; but that, although they spoke of the Divinity of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, they spoke of it uniformly as an inferior and subordinate Divinity, derived from the Father, who was the supreme and only true God, and to whom alone, the highest degree of worship was to be paid. This is the sum of what Unitarians maintain, and this they can easily and abundantly prove. Your unlearned readers are therefore here liable to be misled by you, as to the sentiments not only of modern Unitarians, but also of the ancient Christian Fathers. For, however entire the concurrence of those latter may be, as to the Divinity of Christ, they do not sanction those views of that doctrine, which are now maintained by the Established Church, and to which you will, of course, be supposed to refer.

When I began these Letters, it was my design to enter fully into this subject; and, by copious extracts from the ancient writers whom you have named, to prove, that if we cannot call them our allies, neither can they be justly claimed as yours. But the topics I have treated have occupied so much more space and time than I anticipated, that I must relinquish that design, and be content to do little more than offer a few remarks on your extracts.——The first you produce, is from *the second Epistle of Clement of Rome;* a work which, Eusebius says, was not quoted by the ancients, and which Abp. Usher, Mr. Jer. Jones, Dr. Lardner, and many other learned and cautious critics have rejected as undoubtedly spurious. It was probably forged in the second century, and may, therefore, represent the opinions of that age. But to judge of these, we must not take,

as you have done, the first nine words of a sentence consisting of as many lines. The sense of the author cannot thus be ascertained. Read the whole sentence, in connexion with the whole fragment, (for it is nothing more,) and compare it with our Lord's own discourse in John v., to which it refers; and it will afford no evidence, that even the *Pseudo-Clemens* was a believer in the Divinity of Christ.—The Epistle of *Barnabas*, I hesitate not to say, is unworthy of a moment's consideration. Be the advocates for its genuineness who they may, internal evidence establishes its spuriousness. Though bearing the name of Barnabas, (a Levite,) the author speaks of himself as having been a heathen; and if he did not, "his speech itself would betray him;" for the style is not that of a Jew, who lived before the destruction of Jerusalem. Mr. Jer. Jones has produced ten instances of "notorious falsehoods and gross mistakes;" and the trifling, silly, idle conceits, in which the work abounds, are utterly unworthy of an apostolic man, the friend and companion of Paul. Eusebius calls it γραφη νοθος; Cotelerius doubts its genuineness; Basnage, Fabricius, and many others deny it; and Mr. Jer. Jones has proved it to be apocryphal, by arguments that cannot be refuted.—You next quote *Ignatius*. Any impartial judge will quickly perceive that this witness has been grossly tampered with, and refuse to admit his testimony. The tricks that have been played, even with the smaller edition of the seven Epistles, are too manifest to allow of any insulated passages being quoted, without undergoing the most rigid scrutiny. And I will venture to say, that the three passages you have cited, belong not to the age of the reputed author. The genuineness of the Epistles of Ignatius is a long and intricate subject, not to be treated in this place, though I should be far from shrinking from it, if it were necessary. The interpolations of the

larger edition are now, I believe, universally acknowledged. Many very able critics have admitted that the smaller edition is very far indeed from being pure; and it is difficult to imagine how any one, acquainted with the language of Christian antiquity, can fail to discover, even in these, the hand of a writer, long posterior to the age of Ignatius. † ——The doxology of *Polycarp*, I also question; and it is on these grounds:—That it is given differently by Eusebius, (Eccl. Hist. lib. iv. c. 15,) and that it is inconsistent with all the early doxologies, which are always addressed *to* the Father, *through* the Son, and *by* the Holy Spirit. Nor is it suitable to the apostolical simplicity of the epistle written by the venerable martyr to the church at Smyrna. The writing from which your extract is taken, comes to us in a very questionable shape, from one of whom nothing is known, but that he was a martyr, and who confesses that it had been long lost, that it was discovered to him almost obliterated, by a revelation from Polycarp. And it is the judgment of Mosheim, that whatever may have been its original authority, it has been corrupted and interpolated by some weak and superstitious person, who, in his endeavours to multiply miracles, descends even to trifling, and occasionally falls into the absurdity of disagreeing with himself."—*Comm. de Reb. &c. Cent. i.* § 53, n. *

† "To whichever edition," says Mosheim, "we may give the preference, we shall never, under the present circumstances, let us endeavour what we may, be able to exonerate these Epistles from all suspicion of corruption and interpolation."—*Mosh. Comm. De Reb. ante Const. Cent.* i. § 52, n. ***. See also *Lardner's Works*, vol. ii. p. 68; but particularly *Daillé de Scriptis sub Dion. Areop. et Ignat. nominibus, &c.*—a work which denies the genuineness even of the smaller edition of these Epistles; and, if I may presume to state my opinion on such a subject, has not been refuted in the *Vindiciæ Ignat.* of the very learned Bp. Pearson.

To the competency of your other witnesses to give testimony to the opinions of the reputed orthodox Fathers of their day, though I am fully convinced that they are all corrupted, more or less, * I have nothing specifically to object; but I do object most strongly to the manner in which their testimony is extorted, and to their being allowed to speak only in broken, unconnected sentences. A skilful, patient cross-examination would exhibit them in a very different character. I do not mean to assert that their testimony would thus be transferred to our side; but I am certain that it would be found to be of no great importance to yours. Not even in the works of Bull, or of Waterland, nor yet, on the other hand, in those of Petavius, Episcopius, Whitby, Clarke, or Whiston, can a satisfactory opinion be formed of the doctrines of the Ante-Nicene Fathers. Let him who wishes for correct views of the sentiments of these Fathers, read *Justin Martyr's Dialogue with Trypho*, *Irenæus on Heresies*, *Novatian on the Trinity*, *Tetullian against Praxeas*, *Origen against Celsus*, and *his Treatise on Prayer*, *Lactantius' Div. Institutions*, &c. &c.† and he,

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* See *Daillé De Usu Patrum*, lib. i. c. 3.

† It was my intention to introduce here, several extracts from these and other writers, prior to the Council of Nice, to prove that they did not maintain the modern doctrine of the Trinity, and fell very far short of the standard of the creed of Pseudo-Athanasius; but, being pressed for time, and not willing to give these extracts at second-hand; and also being convinced that my labour would be thrown away, I have relinquished my design. I shall, therefore, only take this opportunity of requesting, that if any reader of the Archdeacon of Cleveland's Charge should be induced, by the references in notes, (18 & 16,) to read *Bp. Bull's Defensio Fidei*, &c. and his *Judicium Eccles. Cath.*, they would not neglect Whitby's *Disquisitiones Modestæ*, or the "audacious author of the tract, intitled, *The Judgment of the Fathers*," (p. 62,) which they will find in the third volume of the Old Socinian Tracts, and well deserving of their notice.

and he alone, will be a competent judge on this subject. And if he will read with an unprejudiced mind, I think I may venture to predict, that he will be fully convinced, that the orthodoxy of those days was such as would now bear the stigma of heterodoxy; and that amidst all the differences of different writers, and all the inconsistencies which almost every single writer betrays, neither the doctrine of the Trinity, as it is now professed, nor any other of what are called the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel, were held by any of them. They talked of the Divinity of Jesus; they called him God; they paid him some kind of worship; they also, in some instances, ascribed Divinity to the Holy Spirit; and, in the latter end of the second century, not before, began to use the word *Trinity*; but they universally acknowledged that the Father was the only true God, and the only object of supreme worship. I do not mean to say that they were Unitarians—far from it. Though their aberrations from the truth were not so great as those of their successors, they departed widely from the form of sound words delivered by the first preachers of the Gospel, and invented creeds, the dogmas of which were more "in accord-

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though the author's manner may not be free from objection: that if they should turn to *Waterland's Sermons*, they would also attend to the *Replies* to *Whitby*, and of others who engaged in the controversy with that learned but not very judicious writer: or that if they should have recourse to the *Inquiry, &c. of Dr. Burgh*, they would by no means overlook the masterly *Remarks, &c.* by the *Rev. A. Temple, of Richmond*, and his *Letters to Dr. Randolph*, in vindication of the Remarks. I have no hesitation in recommending to the impartial reader, *Dr. Priestley's History of the Corruptions of Christianity*, and his *History of Early Opinions concerning Jesus Christ*: works which I acknowledge are not wholly free from mistakes; but which contain, I will venture to say, more correct and comprehensive views of the opinions of the ancient Christian Church, and of the progress of error, than are elsewhere to be found.

ance with the philosophical prejudices," which they unhappily brought with them into the Christian church. These corrupters of Gospel truth, could not, however, destroy it. It was retained by the great body of believers, who, though they could boast of some men of learning and eminence, as Paul of Samosata, Noetus of Smyrna, Marcellus of Ancyra, Sabellius, Theodotus, Artemon, and Praxeas, were not generally "the wise, after the flesh, the mighty, or the noble." For as in the days of the apostles, so in succeeding times, "God chose the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise; the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, God chose, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are."

We do then presume to "allege antiquity in our favour." But to this you also put in your claim. "Let us tell them," you say, (p. 7,) "that we have Creeds approaching nearly in antiquity to the Inspired Records, from which they are, with critical exactness, deduced. Of these, the most ancient was comprised in the few words; "*I believe in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost;* a declaration so comprehensive, as to affirm at once the Trinity and the Unity of the Godhead; and so simple, that not even the humblest convert could mistake its meaning." Allow me then to ask, How are we to account for the fact admitted by Tertullian, that the humblest converts in his days, "dreaded the *œconomy*, (*i. e.* the doctrine of the Trinity as it was then understood,) and charged those who maintained it, with being "worshippers of two, and even of three Gods; while they held the monarchy," (*i. e.* the doctrine of the divine Unity in the strictest sense,) and

gloried in being "worshippers of one God only."* This appears to me perfectly inconsistent with the high antiquity of your pretended Creed. Yet you say, "By Synopses of this description, in the very earliest ages of Christianity, truth was discriminated from error." It would have been well if you had furnished some proof of these assertions. Where are these Synopses to be found? I know of nothing that bears the form of a Creed, prior to the age of Irenæus, A. D. 178:† and that, if it be a form, professes faith in *One God, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, &c. and in one Christ Jesus, the Son of God,* &c. &c.‡ You will perhaps allege that the Baptismal Formula, as you call it, was a Creed; I assert that it is not a formula, and that it was never used as a Creed, whatever Episcopius may have stated, or "the acute Prelate," Bp. Bull, may have remarked (Charge, &c. p. 46). Neither of them can produce any evidence in their support.

The words of Tertullian cited by Bp. Bull, in the passage given in your note, p. 46, are not, as you represent them, a formula; and if the learned Prelate means by his "*communem fidem exponens ait,*" to say that the Presbyter of Carthage designed they should be so understood, he is

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* *Adv. Prax.* § 3.

† See *Bingham's Antiq.* &c. B. x. ch. 3, 4. vol. iv. *Suiceri Thesaur. Art.* Συμβολον.

‡ But the passage in Irenæus, to which I allude is not a form; it is nothing more than a summary of the Christian doctrine contrasted with that of the Valentinians. "Ecclesia enim quamquam per universam orbis terrarum usque ad fines terræ dispersa, ab apostolis et ipsorum discipulis fidem accepit, quæ est in Unum Omnipotentem Deum, qui fecit &c. &c. *Iren. adv. Hæres. lib. i. c.* 2.

far from correct. Tertullian speaks, indeed, more than once of a rule of faith, *(regula fidei,)* but he means by that the substance of the faith, not any form of words; nor is any such form to be found in his writings, or in any of so early a date. Little was known of Creeds before the Council of Nice; after that, not a council was held, whatever its object, or however small a number of bishops assembled, but it ended with a new Creed, graced with a due portion of anathemas. If any very ancient Creed is to be found, it is one given by Paul. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." This is our confession; thus we believe; and are therefore surely justified when we "allege antiquity in our favour."

I cannot conclude, without briefly adverting to one other subject, mentioned in pp. 28, 29, of the Appendix. You there "venture to assure the Socinians, that if ever a New Translation of the Scriptures, instead of being enterprised by a solitary individual (or even a few individuals) should be effected, in the only proper mode, as a National Work; upon the most impartial canons of interpretation it will supply far more texts than it will take away, in favour of the Orthodox Faith." You particularise Eph. v. 5, which, you say, should be rendered *In the kingdom of Christ*, even God.—2 Thess. i. 12. *According to the grace of Jesus Christ*, our God and Lord;—and three or four more of a similar construction: from which it is evident, that the impartial canons of criticism to which you refer, and on the aid of which to the cause of orthodoxy, you place such firm reliance, are those relating to the Greek article, applied by Mr. Granville Sharp, and his learned

supporters, Bp. Burgess, Dr. Wordsworth, Bp. Middleton, and Mr. Veysie. A New Translation of the Scriptures, as a National Work, is, I fear, an undertaking rather to be desired than expected. It will not gladden our eyes: and that which is now used, will, I feel confident, outlive the credit of your boasted canons. Whoever shall have the honour of accomplishing this great work, they will, I doubt not, be too wise to be guided by rules of construction which cannot stand the test of a rigid examination; which have been most satisfactorily demonstrated to be imperfect and fallacious. That the texts you have quoted, and others similar to them, should be translated according to these rules, you have asserted, without any proof. In the same brief manner, I must be allowed to assert, that they should not; and the common translation of them cannot be so materially changed, without entirely misrepresenting the meaning of the original authors. To justify this assertion, that is, to shew the fallacy of these rules, would require more leisure than I can now command, and ampler space than these Letters will allow. Nor is this necessary. The subject has been fully discussed, and the fallacy of these rules most satisfactorily proved, by a very acute, though, perhaps, not a sufficiently grave writer, stiling himself Gregory Blunt, in *Six More Letters to Gr. Sharp*; by the Rev. Calvin Winstanley, in *A Vindication of certain Passages in the common English Version, &c.*; * and by a critic in the Monthly Review, N.

* This admirable work, by an orthodox Clergyman of the Church of England, containing a learned, brief, yet complete refutation of Mr. G. Sharp's canons, was suppressed, not very long after its appearance, for reasons which, I believe, have never been stated. Happily, it had previously reached America, and its merits being duly appreciated by the liberal theologians of that country, it has been there reprinted, at the press of the University of Cambridge. It is not, therefore, lost to the world

S. vol. 62 and 67, who, in his remarks on the publications of Bp. Middleton and Mr. Veysie, has proved himself a master in his art. That canons of interpretation, which render a doctrine of the highest moment, dependent for some of its strongest evidence on a nicety of Greek construction, that appears to have been either unobserved, or unapplied, by the ablest translators and critics of all preceding ages, could not be established by any modern ingenuity or learning, might be fairly presumed, previous to any examination; and the scrutiny which they have undergone, in the works to which I have referred, has confirmed this presumption, and clearly shewn, that while they would lead to an interpretation, exhibiting the sacred penmen in unfavourable colours, irreconcileable with the uprightness that characterizes their writings, they are themselves devoid of that plainness and simplicity, which are amongst the surest marks of truth.

Ασκλους ὁ μυθος της αληθειας εφυ
Κ'ου ποικιλων δει σ'ανδιχ' ἑρμηνευμαιων,
Εχει γαρ αυτα καιρον· ὁ δ'αδικος λογος,
Νοσων εν αυτῳ, φαρμακων δειται σοφων.

But it is time to conclude these Letters, which have extended far beyond what I had anticipated. If I have passed over any topics of importance, it is because, in the midst of so many, they have escaped my notice: If I have busied myself about what may be deemed trifles, it is because you appeared to lay no little stress upon them; and I thought they might unduly impress the minds of others—"Hæ nugæ seria ducent In mala." The task which I have now accomplished, was undertaken from a principle of duty; and under the influence of that principle, I trust it has been performed. I foresaw that it would be irksome and painful, and so it has proved. I have had to examine

objections which have been repeatedly answered, and to repel calumnies which have been a thousand times refuted; and I have been under the necessity of speaking of yourself, in a way that has given me much pain, and which, if possible, I would gladly have avoided. If, in vindicating the doctrines you have so bitterly opposed, and the characters you have so wrongfully aspersed, there has been any thing in my manner needlessly harsh and offensive; if I have been betrayed into any thing unbecoming a scholar and a Christian, I here avow my sincere regret, and tender a willing apology. And if I have, in any instance, misapprehended your words, and attributed to them a meaning which they will not bear, or which you did not design them to express; or if I have fallen into errors of any other kind, I require only to be convinced, in order publicly to acknowledge and correct them. In such case, only, am I disposed again to notice the subjects of these Letters. I have no fondness for controversy, nor any wish to acquire, by practice, "polemical dexterity." The character of a controversialist I have now sustained for the first time: I willingly lay it down, to be resumed no more. "Hic cæstus artemque repono:" and I cheerfully return to occupations more congenial with my spirit, and, as I trust, productive of more certain and more lasting good.

I am, Reverend Sir,

Your obedient servant,

C. WELLBELOVED.

York, *April* 6, 1823.

## POSTSCRIPT.

WHILE the last sheet of this second edition was going through the press, I received *Keene's Bath Journal of Monday, Oct.* 20, containing a long letter addressed to me by the Rev. T. Falconer, in consequence of my having, as he supposed, misunderstood a passage in the Preface to his 'Bampton Lectures,' and cited above in page 46. I take this opportunity of stating that when I spoke of "the bigotry of the learned body to which he belongs," I did not intend to pass a censure on the clergy in general. Far from it. I have the happiness of being acquainted with many individuals of that body, whom I highly esteem and honour as men of a truly candid, catholic, and christian spirit. But I conceived that when Mr. F. spoke of "local inquisitors and familiars," he alluded to a body of clergy in some particular place; and considering where the Sermons were preached and printed, and not observing whence the dedication was dated, I concluded, too hastily, that the place was Oxford. The censure, therefore, conveyed in Mr. Falconer's words, I considered as belonging peculiarly to the clergy in that University. But it appears from his letter, that I was mistaken, and that he alluded to some of the clergy in Oxford, and to some in Bath; who will not thank him, I imagine, on account either of themselves, or of their brethren in general, forhaving "enumerated the particulars the allusion comprised."

C. W.

*Oct.* 23, 1823.

FINIS.

*Shortly will be published,*

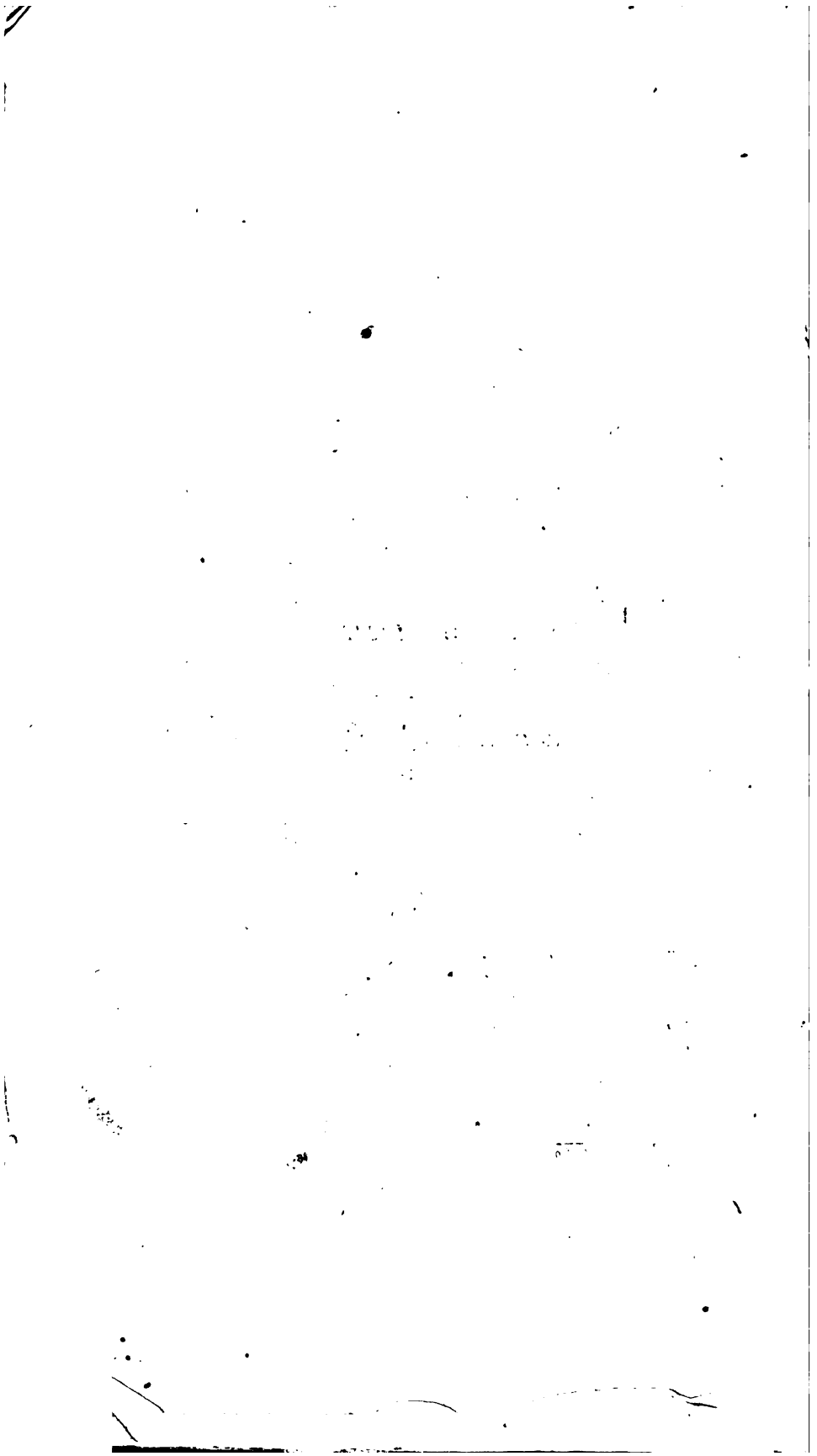
BY THE SAME AUTHOR,

## UNITARIANS NOT GUILTY OF DENYING THE LORD WHO BOUGHT THEM;

## A SERMON,

*Preached before the Unitarian Association of Hull, &c. &c. on Thursday, Sept.* 18, 1823.

*Thomas Wilson and Sons, Printers, High-Ousegate, York.*



Rev.d Jared Sparks
from the Author.

# THREE
# ADDITIONAL LETTERS

ADDRESSED TO

THE VEN. AND REV.

FRANCIS WRANGHAM,

BY THE

REV. C. WELLBELOVED.

# THREE ADDITIONAL LETTERS

ADDRESSED TO

THE VEN. AND REV.

## FRANCIS WRANGHAM, M. A.

ARCHDEACON OF CLEVELAND,

IN REPLY TO HIS ANIMADVERSIONS

ON

## THREE FORMER LETTERS

*In the Appendix to a Charge, delivered to the Clergy of his Archdeaconry, in August,* 1823.

By C. WELLBELOVED.

Ει μεν μη 'δικουμενοις εχρην
Τολμηρον ειναι, καρτ' αν ειχον ἡσυχως.
*Eurip.*

He that is first in his cause seemeth just;
But his neighbour cometh and searcheth him.—*Solomon.*

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# LETTER I.

Συ τοι λεγεις νιν, ουκ εγω. συ γαρ ποιεις
Τουργον. τα δ'εργα τους λογους εὑρισκεται.—*Soph.*

Non recuso damnari ab omnibus eruditis et bonis viris, si rationem, quâ me tueor, similem adversariorum iracundis et iniquis scriptis judicent.—*Cleric.*

REVEREND SIR,

ACCORDING to the strict import of the words with which I concluded the third of the Letters that I lately took the liberty of addressing to you, I might very fairly hold myself excused from noticing the Reply you have condescended to make to them, in the Appendix to your last Charge. For, amidst all the caustic sneers, and the bitter sarcasms in which that Appendix abounds, you have not *convicted* me of "any thing needlessly harsh and offensive in my manner;" of having, "in any instance, misapprehended your words, and attributed to them a meaning which they will not bear, or which you did not design them to express;" or of having fallen into material "errors of any other kind." In case of your doing this, and only in such a case, I

declared my willingness again to notice the subjects of those Letters, that I might publicly own and retract my errors. Yet, on carefully perusing your Appendix, I feel that I cannot, with propriety, remain silent. However averse from controversy, especially on topics which have long, if not fruitlessly, engaged the talents of far abler disputants, and which, it appears, can hardly be carried on with mildness and good temper; and however unwilling, in the waning time of life, to be diverted from occupations, which, notwithstanding your contemptuous rebukes, I deem important and useful;* were I to be silent, I should be wanting in a due respect for that reputation, of which no one who deserves it, can think lightly, or fail to be jealous; in a just concern for the credit of some illustrious advocates of Unitarianism, against whom you have thought fit to bring fresh accusations; and in zeal for that faith which I conscientiously regard as most honourable to God, and most beneficial to man, and which with more impetuosity than skill, you have again assailed. I hope I know myself, so well at least, as to be able, most sincerely to avow that it is not any fondness for "the puerile luxury of having the last word," that induces me to resume the character of a controversialist, which I had hoped to sustain only once, but a conviction that it is a sacred duty which I owe to the cause of religious truth. You have gathered up and hurled again, the shattered fragments of your "splendid weapons,"—"the remnants of the former fray;" and though by repelling these, I may do little or no good, by retiring, as if

* *Qui non tantum sæculi sui causâ, sed etiam propter posteritatem manum calamo admovent, ab utilibus scriptis avocari non debent, ad confutandas calumnias, nisi plane necesse sit, &c.*—Cleric.

discomfited and disabled, I might give occasion for an unseemly triumph. Much against my will, therefore, I am compelled to renew the contest. And it is my sincere and earnest prayer that the God of justice and of truth may finally grant success to that cause, on which ever side it may be, to which justice and truth belong.

Εμοι μεν ουτοσι
Αθλος γ'υπεκκεισεται· τυ δε
Πραξιν φιλαν διδοι.

Although you have not convicted me of any of those errors for which, if proved against me, I professed myself willing publicly to apologize, yet you have accused me of several improprieties in the management of the controversy. You complain of my having manifested a very bad temper, of having indulged in "habitual sarcasms," of having "suffered myself to be betrayed into uncivil personalities," &c. &c. If this were really the case, I might surely be permitted to ask, who set me the example? Or, who has followed it? The bad temper, the uncivil personalities, the sneers, and sarcasms, which deform every page of the Appendix to your last Charge, will not have escaped the notice of the most careless eye, nor have failed to meet with the reprobation of the most candid spirit: and as to the preceding Charge, its Notes and Appendix, which called forth the "*verbosa et grandis* EPISTOLA," if they did not abound in personalities, and sneers, and sarcasms, I have yet to learn what these terms signify. It is true indeed, that you there "deprecate all personal application of what you state concerning Socinianism, as a sect, to your respectable correspondent" Capt.

Thrush; but is there no personal application of the most offensive nature to others? I say nothing of your imimputing sciolism, or ignorance to Unitarian writers in general, or of your designating the works of Cogan, Carpenter, and others, in particular, as a "nauseating *crambe recocta*." But is there nothing personal in your sarcastic remarks on the 'Trans-atlantic Exile,' and on the Editors of the Improved Version of the New Testament? Is there no uncivil personality in charging such a man as Priestley with "perverting testimonies by *artful* constructions;" and in representing Mr. Belsham, well known to be the principal, if not the sole Editor of the Improved Version, as in the title of that work *deliberately practising an imposition upon the public?* Do the vituperations you have multiplied against these "apostles" of Unitarianism, cleave to their works, to their arguments, or to their cause alone? Do they not tend, are they not designed, to injure their reputation, not as authors but as men; to ruin their character, and to make them contemptible or hateful in the eyes of the public? The plain, the intelligible, and, may I not add, the intended language of the accusations you have brought against each of these zealous defenders of the Unitarian doctrine is, "Hic niger est, hunc tu, Romane, caveto." And I will venture to say that no one who read your Third Charge, with its Appendages, trusting implicitly to your quotations, and your reasoning upon them, could rise from the perusal without feelings of dislike and abhorrence, not of the doctrine of Unitarianism alone, but of the persons of its most eminent advocates. I again acknowledge that I could not observe the contemptuous manner in which you treat the sect of Unitarians, and the stain you labour to

fix on the reputation of men whom I have long been accustomed most highly to esteem for the sake of their virtues, no less than their talents, without a lively feeling of indignation; and under the influence of that feeling, I wrote. "Facit indignatio EPISTOLAM." You were at perfect liberty to sneer at our Creed, or our "No-Creed," to ridicule our attempts to support it, to represent them in the light in which you might seriously regard them, and to warn your clergy and others against being led away by what you deem our errors; and in the exercise of this liberty, I think I should have been so little fearful of the result as not to have molested you. But when you chose to represent these as the errors, not of the understanding, but of the heart; when you assailed our good character, and taught your clergy to believe that we were not only ignorant, but artful; destitute, not only of learning, but of honesty; ready to practise every artifice to serve our cause, willing to employ every means, however dishonourable, that might promote our views; when I perceived that the inevitable impression that your pamphlet was calculated to make, was not only that our creed was erroneous, but the men who defended it were bad; and that these accusations were, as might be apprehended, adding greatly to the prejudices against us, amongst those who had not the means of detecting their falsehood, I was provoked to opposition. Writing under the impulse of emotions which I might be justly ashamed of myself not to have experienced, expressions may have escaped me, which, in other circumstances, I should not have employed, which, perhaps, in no circumstances, can be justified. On revising the '*Three Letters*,' when, contrary to my expectation, a

second Edition was demanded, a few such expressions at the suggestion of an impartial friend, were cancelled.* And if any other impartial person (for neither you nor I, Sir, are proper judges of each other's temper and conduct, or of our own, in this controversy) will point out, either in my former, or my present Letters to you, any offence against the law of good manners, or of Christian charity, I pledge myself openly to acknowledge my fault, and from the public and yourself, to sue for pardon.

If I have "suffered myself to be betrayed into personalities," and even "uncivil personalities;" have they not been such as were the unavoidable consequence of the mode of attack which you had adopted? From the works of preceding writers, you repeated what I considered calumnies, and what had been fully proved to be such in the worst sense of the term: and although I did not believe that you had repeated them with precisely the same motives, by which they, from whom you borrowed them, had been influenced, I could not but regard you as, in some degree, involved in their guilt. I acquitted you, in my own mind, of any malignant intention, but judged you to be highly censurable for repeating, with the evident design of vilifying the character of Unitarians, charges of so serious a nature, the grounds of which you had not been at the pains to examine. Whatever may have been your motives, the charges you brought against Unitarians and Unitarian-

* While this sheet was in the hands of the printer, my friend kindly pointed out to me a passage in the note, p. 65, which he had overlooked, and in which the epithet *calumniating* is retained. As it was my design to expunge every term which might be thought offensive, I regret that it was not cancelled with others of the same kind, in the Second Edition.

ism, were *groundless charges.* Such I have proved them; and to such I have been accustomed to apply, perhaps not in its most common acceptation, but yet not without the authority of Dr. Johnson,* the term *calumny.* You further cited passages from Unitarian writers, in such a manner as to misrepresent the meaning of the Authors; you reasoned upon those passages so as to cast an unmerited censure both on the doctrines and on the advocates of Unitarianism; and you withheld what would have given a different complexion to these passages, and prevented any offence. Is such conduct, whether it proceed from design or carelessness, fair and honourable? Is it strictly consistent with justice and truth? Let any impartial person judge between us. "My adversary," you say, (p. 92,) "appears to think the terms Calumniator and Liar, fair weapons in theological warfare." Not Sir, in warfare purely theological. And if I have used such expressions, or any equivalent to them, which the methods adopted by the assailants did not warrant me to use, let me be held unworthy to have entered the lists, and reprobated as having "contended unlawfully." Whatever I may have said of those who supplied you with the weapons of your warfare, I am not conscious of having used any personalities towards you, but such as the nature of your hostility compelled me to use. I carefully abstained from many observations, which various passages in your Charge suggested, and went not beyond the limits of the ground you had yourself taken, though I might easily have done it, to find such means either of defence or

* See *Dr. Johnson's English Dictionary, in v.* "*Calumny;*" and the example cited from *Sir W. Temple.*

annoyance. I did go perhaps a little out of my way, to express a personal respect for you, to assure you that though urged by a paramount sense of duty, publicly to appear your adversary, I did not forget the civilities I had received from you in private, and to profess my unfeigned esteem of your talents and virtues; and notwithstanding you have rejected as *Grecian presents*, what were presented to you with perfect sincerity, I do not regret to have offered them.

One expression I find, both from what you have observed in the Appendix, (p. 66,) and from the information of mutual friends, has given you particular offence. I have spoken in the beginning of my First Letter, of the labours of those who misrepresent Unitarians, as "inglorious, but not unprofitable." You avow that no motives of self-interest or preferment have had any influence in directing your labours. I am far from being disposed to question your word in this matter: and I willingly declare my sincere regret if I have so expressed, what I intended only as a general observation respecting those who had preceded you, as necessarily to lead any one to conclude that I imputed such motives to you. If you will look again at the passage which has excited your anger, you will perceive that it states nothing respecting the motives of any one, but merely asserts that they who write against Unitarians go not unrewarded. Is this a groundless assertion? Has not preferment followed as closely, and as invariably as the effect succeeds the cause, every effort to write down the doctrines and the teachers of Unitarianism? If it has, and I apprehend no one who has paid any attention to the progress of the Unitarian contro-

versy during the last thirty or forty years can deny it, am I not justified in saying that the labours of the adversaries of Unitarianism, are not unprofitable? Have not our eyes seen the doughty champions of Trinitarianism rising with vertiginous rapidity from almost the lowest to the highest ranks in the church militant? From rectors or vicars, becoming in swift succession Archdeacons, Deans, and Prelates? Was there no connexion between the Charge of the Archdeacon of St. Alban's, in which he undertook "to destroy the credit of Priestley and the authority of his name," and his advancement to the sees of St. David's and of Rochester? Can any one imagine that the Archiepiscopal mitre would have so early graced the brow of the author of "Discourses on the Scriptural Doctrines of Atonement and Sacrifice," had they not been accompanied by "Dissertations" designed to destroy the credit and the authority of every Unitarian writer of note, and especially of One who deservedly occupies the first station in our humble churches? I say nothing of the minor honours of less powerful or less conspicuous combatants, of which the register of ecclesiastical promotions would furnish an ample list. I mean not to blame those who dispense these rewards. They act in perfect conformity with the spirit of the religious establishment which they are bound to maintain; and it may be, with a conscientious regard to what they deem the interests of religious truth. Nor do I mean to impute worldly and interested motives to those who earn and who receive these rewards. I willingly allow that there may be many, even of those who most vehemently endeavour to oppose the progress of Unitarianism, who with the excellent Chillingworth, "would

never do any thing for preferment, which they would not do but for preferment." When I say then, that the labours of those who calumniate us, though inglorious, (and so every candid mind will esteem them) are not unprofitable, I "dive not into motives," I suppose not any "unworthy objects," I lay no claim to the "attribute of Omniscience," I barely state a fact; and it is a fact which I am fully warranted to state. At the same time, the acknowledged laws of the human mind, and observation and experience of the world will justify the suspicion that cases may occur in which interest shall be a more powerful incitement than a love of truth; or in which self-deceit may flatter a man that he is serving God, when if he thoroughly knew his own heart, he would find himself engaged in the service of Mammon or of Fame. When the circumstances and temper of the times open a plain and unerring road to preferment, all who know what human nature is, must acknowledge that there is no little danger that it will be pursued by some with no other view than that of attaining the end. So far I may surely be allowed to go; when even a Dignitary of your Church, one of the most eminent of your predecessors, speaking of the defenders of Subscription, to whom especially the road to preferment was open in his day, has observed; "It is not unreasonable to suppose that legal emoluments in possession, and still greater in expectation, may sharpen a dullish genius, and give portions of apprehension and abilities, on some subjects, even where nature has denied them on all others.—Take away the legal emoluments of the ministry, and though you leave subscriptions" (might he not have said, had his subject admitted

it "the thirty-nine articles themselves"?) few would be at the pains to defend them." *

In your former Charge, Sir, you talk of the "polemical dexterity" of Unitarians; but I will venture to say that no Unitarian ever displayed more of this dexterity than yourself. In the Appendix, on which I am now animadverting, you have had the skill to put almost entirely out of sight the points which were chiefly at issue between us. The topics on which I professed principally to dwell, and for the sake of which alone I declared that I was urged to take up my pen against you, with singular ingenuity you contrive to throw into shade, and treat as altogether insignificant and undeserving of any further regard. I acted entirely on the defensive; but you have endeavoured to represent me as volunteering an attack upon yourself, not particularly called for. You thus begin your Appendix: "The conclusiveness of my arguments in favour of the divinity of Jesus Christ has been somewhat uncourteously denied by the Rev. C. Wellbeloved," and in the next sentence you speak of "Three Letters addressed to you *upon the same subject*." This, Sir, permit me to say, is by no means a fair statement. The examination of your arguments for the divinity of Jesus Christ, occupies a comparatively small portion of the Three Letters, and holds in them professedly a subordinate station. Indeed your arguments appeared to me to rest on such palpable misapprehension of the language of Scripture, to be so utterly destitute of force, and consequently so little likely to make any impression unfavourable

* *Archdeacon Blackburne's Works, Vol. V. p. 329.*

to Unitarianism, that if you had confined yourself to to these, I should not have given myself the trouble to notice them. Nor, after all, should I have bestowed upon them any consideration, but for the sake of shewing their impotence, lest any persons should be found, who might be disposed to judge of them not by their intrinsic worth, but by the high reputation of the learned Dignitary by whom they had been employed. But by putting these forward so prominently, as the main objects of contention between us you have displayed a considerable portion of the polemical skill which you ascribe to your adversaries. You thus keep out of sight the injustice of which you have been guilty towards Unitarians, and of which I may confidently affirm that you have been convicted; and at the same time, greatly magnify the improprieties of temper of which you accuse me; by leading your readers to conclude that they have been manifested, not where some excuse might be offered for them, in the repelling of misrepresentation and calumny aimed at illustrious characters, but where they cannot for a moment be tolerated, in the investigation of religious doctrines, and the interpretation of sacred Scripture. This, Sir, as a *ruse de guerre* may gain for a disputant some credit with mere polemics; but it cannot establish his reputation for manly courage and openness, among the ingenuous lovers of truth. To disabuse your readers, and to justify myself, I must beg leave briefly to state what was really the purport of the Three Letters, and what if I mistake not, they have effected.

In your Charge delivered in the year 1822, and in the Notes and Appendix, which accompanied it, you

brought various accusations against Unitarians in general; but particularly against some of their most distinguished writers. You accused them of practising a thousand arts of evasion in order to surmount the obstacles which Scripture throws in their way. You more than insinuated that they set aside all the usual and legitimate canons of criticism and interpretation for the purpose of pressing the Scriptures into their service. You accused them of mutilating the Sacred Writings, wantonly, and according to their pleasure wherever they were decidedly in opposition to their creed; of misrepresenting and garbling the statements of their adversaries; of claiming the association of certain great names upon the slightest pretexts; of not scrupling in short to employ any means, however disingenuous, which might make the unwary believe that with them alone the unpolluted doctrines of Christianity are to be found. You spoke of Unitarianism as offering a friendly veil to hardihood of speculation and audacity of conjecture; as being a menstruum which easily lowers the terms of Scripture, and readily dissolves every plain but obnoxious precept, as conciliating not only the Pyrrhonist, but the profligate, who with a dethroned Christ, and a degraded Christianity, (i. e. professing to be Unitarians, for such you have not denied to be your meaning) can affect to be Christians and find little or nothing in their very religion to condemn them." To justify this last most appalling accusation, you professed to have the authority of Dr. Priestley himself; but instead of fairly quoting his words, you left out a material part of a sentence, you introduced words of your own, and took no notice of the connexion in which the passage you pretended to cite, occur. In

some other instances you misrepresented the language of this excellent person, and then grounded on it charges, most highly injurious to his character, and to the doctrines he so zealously and ably defended. Emulous of the example of Horsley, who in vain attempted to "destroy the credit of his name" while living, you ventured to attempt to sully or efface his posthumous reputation; and to this end, having nothing new to alledge, you condescended to "vamp up a new dress of" criminating "patchwork from the rags and tatters"* of your great predecessor, and with most solemn and portentous parade exhibited, among other things, what the distinguished object of your animadversion had proved to be not "a trial of his hand at *improved* versions" but a printer's blunder, as an unquestionable and an overwhelming evidence of his temerity and impiety. In the same spirit, and implicitly depending upon Magee, and Nares, and Rennell, and others of the same school, you assailed in no measured terms the "Improved Version of the New Testament, as not only justifying every iota of crimination you had advanced against Unitarians, but as loaded with "accumulated tricks," and consistent only in its dishonesty. Nor did the writings and the character of its venerable and excellent Editor escape your unmerited censures: you demonstrated his ignorance by palming upon him a blunder of your own, and inferred his denial of the spotless purity of Jesus, by giving to his words a sense which he did not intend them to bear.†

These and other things, Sir, of the like nature, and

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* Charge, &c. 1822, p. 24. † Charge, &c. 1822. *passim.*

not your arguments in defence of the divinity of Jesus Christ, called forth the '*Three Letters*;' and on these *two* of them are almost exclusively occupied. And if I am not very greatly mistaken I have succeded in accomplishing the unpleasant, but unavoidable task in which I engaged. I have convicted you as I proposed, of "unfairness, illiberality, and misrepresentation." I have compared your quotations, and shewn them to be inaccurate; I have examined your reasonings, and proved them to be unsound; I have scrutinized your accusations, and demonstrated them to be groundless; I have traced your authorities, and exposed their insufficiency, and I have detected you in adding to the errors by which you have been yourself misled, errors of your own, adapted still farther to mislead others. But these things you have been pleased to represent as subtleties and sophistries, as 'petty triumphs' as 'petty verbal hypercriticisms' as 'idle and worse than idle janglings,' as 'arrogant meddling with motives,' &c. &c.; and after insinuating, in the words of Grotius, that I cannot well be otherwise than *a babbler in Theology*, you triumphantly ask, "With all the flourishes of the '*Three Letters*,' upon the [illegible] of Deity, the Nominalist, and the Realist, the In-dwelling Scheme, the Modal Hypothesis, &c., what have they explained?" I believe, Sir, you very well know, as do some of your readers also, what these Letters have explained; and I suspect that the explanation has not afforded you much satisfaction. And hence you have endeavoured to keep what they really intended to do, and what they have done, as much as possible, out of sight. They have vindicated, as they proposed, the doctrines and the advocates of Unitarianism, from many severe, and

unfounded accusations, and have shown how disingenuous, how disreputable, and how unsafe it is for one orthodox writer after another, to go on repeating charges against an unpopular, and a hated sect, without being at the pains to examine the foundation on which these charges rest.

No one who dispassionately attends to the very serious accusations brought against Unitarians in your former Charge, &c. and to what has been said in reply to them in the '*Three Letters*', will be satisfied with the light and flippant manner in which they are noticed in your last Appendix. No one surely, who feels the value of a good name, and can thus rightly judge of the estimation in which that treasure is held by others, will think you have sufficiently atoned for the illiberal and unjust manner in which you have treated Unitarians, by admitting that you are chargeable with "a few errors, incurred chiefly during the hurry of various occupations, by relying upon a memory once good, and still too confidently trusted;" by pleading that "you no where professed originality;" by pronouncing, not proving, or even attempting to prove, my arguments "eminently sophistical"; by complaining of my want of courtesy and good temper, or by affecting to have read the '*Three Letters*,' with "more concern on my account than your own," with scarcely any other sensation indeed but that of "grief for me." For this tender concern, and this disinterested grief, I should hold myself bound most gratefully to thank you, could I persuade myself that they were any thing more than *Greek tears*, an equivalent return for my *Greek presents*. And as you were afraid, or unwilling to accept these at my hands,

you cannot be surprised, if with equal incredulity I suspect the sincerity of your concern, and with equal caution reject your pity, "non captus dolis lacrymisque coactis." Some persons may think that explanation, if not retractation and apology, would have been more becoming than the assigning of such inadequate causes, the flourish of *sat erit verbo negare*, or a pertinacious renewal of accusations, as illiberal and as groundless as those already repelled. No one who looks into your last Appendix, can for a moment imagine that a failing and treacherous memory can be pleaded. That memory cannot be otherwise than fully stored and tenacious, (whatever may be thought of the taste of its possessor,) which can lay under contribution so many writers of all ages, and of all descriptions, Christian Fathers and Heathen Philosophers, Racovians and Remonstrants, Dramatists and Divines, to furnish a heap of learned lumber, the dust of which cannot fail to "blind the eyes of the quick-sighted," and under the weight of which, it must be next to miraculous, if a poor Unitarian sciolist escape being crushed to death. But neither a treacherous memory, nor the hurry occasioned by various avocations, nor the acknowledged use of the works of former controversialists, can justify any one in bringing against doctrines which he disapproves, and those who conscientiously maintain them, charges which he has not carefully examined, and which he cannot support, designed to undermine the credit of both. Religious principles are sacred matters, and should be treated in a manner suitable to their nature. They, who in obedience to the dictates of conscience, adopt a creed which not only obtains no countenance from worldly power or fashions, but exposes those who maintain it to

various civil disabilities, excludes them from the friendly intercourse, and even the good offices, of their neighbours, frequently deprives them of the just fruits of their honest industry, and brings upon them suspicion, and reproach, and calumny, ought to be treated, if not with tenderness, yet certainly with strict justice. Let such religious opinions be thoroughly scrutinized; let them be fairly examined, and compared with the word of God: but let them not be assailed by sarcasm or ridicule, or condemned as leading to consequences which cannot be rightly deduced from them. Let those who adopt them, be admonished of their supposed errors, let them be warned of the apprehended danger of their creed, let that which is considered as alone true, be fully explained and recommended to them, but let them not be abused as ignorant or perverse, and calumniated as artful and dishonest, seduced and seducers, as enemies of God and of man.

It is surely time that this mode of theological warfare should be relinquished. In itself it is highly improper, unsuitable to the serious subjects of religious controversy, and to the character of those who are generally engaged in it; in its immediate effects it is disastrous, exciting and fostering evil passions, and diverting the attention from the object on which it ought to be exclusively and steadily fixed, the evidence of truth; and its ultimate consequences are not favourable to the cause which it is intended to promote. No one can justly blame your determination, that "in resolute hostility to the No-creed of Socinianism (with what justice you use these terms, it has been already seen) not even Abp. Magee and Bp. Horsley shall go beyond

you." But every truly candid mind, every sincere and judicious friend of truth, will censure you for adopting the method in which they carried on hostilities. We do not sue for peace, we do not expect friendship; but we have a right to look for fair dealing and legitimate opposition. Put forth all your energies against our doctrines and our arguments; we have no fear for the result; but meddle not with our motives, assail not our characters, refrain from misrepresentations, do not seek to destroy our creed, by attacking our intellectual, literary, or moral attainments. Bp. Horsley set out with the avowed design of writing down the character of his adversary as a theologian; resolving 'to destroy his credit and the authority of his name, by proving his incompetency' to the task he had undertaken. (*Preface to Tracts, &c. p. iv.*) Abp. Magee has evidently followed him, in the same course, and with the same design, particularly with respect to Mr. Belsham; and, as is usual with those who follow a bad example, has gone far beyond his pattern:

"Aetas parentum, pejor avis, tulit
Nos nequiores."

And by this means those champions of orthodoxy have strengthened prejudices, and called into exercise very bad and unchristian feelings; but they have not gained any true or lasting renown, nor succeeded in their attempts to weaken Unitarianism, or to stop its progress. In the immediate object of their hostility, they have failed. The name of Priestley is still held in merited honour; the name of Belsham is widely and sincerely respected; and the authority of both is as great as it ever was, or ever can be, amongst those whose glory it is to call no man *Master* on earth. You, and other

humbler combatants, who are content to gird on the remains of the battered armour of former champions, and to hurl the fragments of their shivered lances, will find your efforts equally unavailing, and your expected victories equally distant and unattainable. But even supposing that Bp. Horsley had succeeded in his professed design, and incontrovertibly proved that Priestley was as ignorant as he represented him; supposing that Abp. Magee, and Rennell, and Nares, *et hoc genus omne*, had demonstrated that the Improved Version was a 'fantastic' work, and its Editor unable or unwilling to translate the Greek Testament fairly, would it thence follow that the distinguishing doctrines of Unitarianism are not true, or even that they were not held by the majority of Christian believers in the first ages of the Church? By no means. To bring out such a conclusion, from such premises, by legitimate reasoning, would baffle the most subtle dialectician. Expert a sophist as you seem to consider me, I cannot imagine even a sophism by which such a conclusion could be supported. Granting that Dr. Priestley mistranslated a passage in Theophilus; that he misinterpreted another in Origen; that he mistook the sense of a third in Athanasius, are we therefore to conclude that he has mistranslated or misinterpreted the numerous other passages he has cited, and that the Ante-Nicene fathers were really as orthodox, in every respect, as their successors? * Or does the question rest on the very few

* The Archdeacon of Cleveland cannot be unacquainted with a notable critical feat of a brother dignitary of the same rank, who, "forsooth, must try his hand" at collating MSS. and Editions of the New Testament. Finding, in the course of his learned investigations, the following note in the third edition of Robert Stephens's Greek Testament, on Matt. xix. 26;

quotations in which he may have been convicted of error? Is he the only theologian who has maintained that the Fathers who lived before the rise of the Arian controversy, held opinions concerning the Trinity very different from those who came after the times of the heresiarch of Alexandria? And will it be said that Petavius, and Zuicker, and Whitby, and Whiston, and Clarke, and Lardner, to name no more, were all as un-

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Προ του, εν τη παλιγγενεσια, διαζολην εχουσι το γ, δ, ε, ζ, ιβ, he considered it, not as denoting a difference of punctuation, but a various reading found in the MSS. here enumerated. "In decyphering these words, he unfortunately construed the Greek preposition προ like the Latin *pro*, and took it in the sense of "for," or "instead of," which in Greek, "as he ought to have known," is expressed by αντι. Hence he concluded that Stephens meant to say "instead of εν τη παλιγγενεσια, the MSS. γ, δ, ε, ζ, ιβ read διαζολην εχουσι, and accordingly quoted ὁι ακολουθησανλις μοι διαζολην εχουσι ὁταν as the reading of Cod. Steph. ε &c." *(See Marsh's Letters to Travis, p. 176-7.)* Now had this learned Archdeacon "tried his hand at improved versions" also, what an important accession should we have received to the Christian doctrine! *Ye which have followed me* HAVE A STOP *when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, &c.* If further he had "tried his hand" at interpretation, what ample scope would there have been for the display of ingenuity and talent, in setting forth the magnificent privilege to be enjoyed by the Twelve when Jesus should sit on his throne, and they should *have a stop!* If a Unitarian "apostle" had committed such an egregious blunder, the Archdeacon of Cleveland would have dubbed him a Sciolist. Pray what was the Archdeacon of Chester?—For such ignorance on the part of a Unitarian critic, Unitarianism would have been reproached as a school of Sciolism. What then, must we think of Trinitarianism?—Such "incompetency" according to the Horsleian canons, would be deemed fatal to the whole system of Unitarianism; but will the present Bishop of St. David's allow that in this case it decides even the single question in the discussion of which it was manifested, and weakens, in any degree, the evidence that he imagines to exist, in favour of the genuineness of 1 John v. 7? The inference is very plain, (and for the sake of the inference I repeat the fact,) that disputed points, whether of doctrine or criticism, should be decided by their own merits, not by the learning or the ignorance, by the accuracy or the blunders, of the disputants. Both truth and charity would be gainers by an attention to this equitable rule.

learned as Priestley is slanderously said to have been? Allowing further, that Bp. Horsley did clearly establish the incompetency of the Historian of the 'Corruptions of Christianity' "in every branch of literature connected with that subject," does it follow that Christianity is now professed, even in that church which boasts of being the purest daughter of the Reformation, in an uncorrupted state, or that the doctrines which he has represented as its corruptions, are, on the contrary, the genuine doctrines of the Gospel? What he undertook to prove, may be demonstrable, though he shquld have failed in his attempt. A cause is not necessarily bad, because an advocate is wanting in ability or skill to defend it. The credit and the authority of the name of Priestley may be destroyed, and yet Unitarianism may be true, and even "all the adjuncts of the main question," capable of being firmly established.

Granting further, that the Improved Version is a dishonest work; that it abounds, as you assert, "in accumulated tricks;" that the venerable Editor knows nothing of Greek, nothing of theology, nothing of all that it is needful for one to know who undertakes to interpret the Oracles of Divine Truth; does it follow from this concession that Unitarianism is not the doctrine of Christ and his apostles? Is Mr. Belsham the founder of Unitarianism? Or, do the arguments urged by Unitarians, (if indeed I may be allowed to suppose that they can argue) depend upon the alleged tricks of the Improved Version, or the blunders of the 'Calm Inquiry'? Let the Archbishop of Dublin and his humble coadjutors succeed in their attempt to write down the Improved Version and its venerable Editor. Let them

persuade the world that the one is worthless, and the other is both ignorant and artful; and what will they achieve? Nothing very honourable to themselves, or useful to their cause. They may create a temporary prejudice in the minds of those who will not be at the pains of judging for themselves; they may deter the wavering and the timid, and all who cannot withstand the force of reproach or ridicule, from openly professing what they may in secret believe; but they cannot thus prove that the creed of Unitarians is not "the faith once delivered to the saints." They may persuade us to betake ourselves again to the Common Version, which many amongst us, indeed, have never forsaken. They may withdraw from our now-revered friend, that high respect to which we have hitherto thought his learning, his talents, and his virtues most justly entitled; but they will not prove our creed erroneous. That depends not on the Improved Version, nor on the 'Calm Inquiry'; nor any other merely human work, and still less on the reputation of any individual Unitarian writer. We feel it desirable to possess a Version of the Scriptures, which shall represent the original more faithfully than that which is in common use; but we do not hold this essentially necessary to the defence of our opinions. No version has ever yet been made, from which those opinions may not be clearly and satisfactorily derived. And if the truth of Unitarianism did indeed depend, in any measure, upon its having been professed and vindicated by men of extensive and sound learning, we can produce names, the credit and authority of which the united efforts of Archdeacons, Deans, and Prelates cannot destroy or diminish.

If, then, you and your leaders in this mode of theological warfare had been successful in your attacks upon the literary and moral character of Unitarian writers, you could have gained only "petty triumphs"; but utterly failing in your efforts, though often renewed, you have only wearied yourselves and others with "idle, and worse than idle janglings." Still however, you, Sir, seem resolved that in such fruitless efforts, such impotent hostilities, you will spend your strength; and, accordingly, you renew your charges against the Improved Version, its venerable Editor, and the much injured Priestley. With what justice, let our readers now judge. They may be unwilling, as I am, to attend to such cavils, but you have imposed upon me the unpleasant task of refuting them; and I cannot well decline it.

You still carp at the "artful title of the 'Improved Version of the New Testament,' which you again term doubly dishonest, in professing to be, not only 'on the plan of the late Archbishop Newcome,' but also to proceed from 'a Society for promoting Christian Knowledge':" (p. 77,) and I will again assert, in full reliance on the upright character, and the solemn declaration of the excellent Editor, of whom even Archbishop Magee declares that he believes him to be *incapable of duplicity*, that in adopting that title, there was no dishonest intention. It is strictly true, that the Version is on the plan of the late Archbishop Newcome: and it is absolutely untrue, that the Editor "used his name as a decoy." It is strictly true, that the work was published by "a Society for promoting Christian Knowledge;" it is not true, that it was in-

tended to draw in any one unsuspectingly to purchase it, as originating in the Bartlett's Buildings' Society. And if twenty country clergymen, all able College tutors, and all most subtile mathematicians, had "procured this work, to their infinite chagrin, *on the mere faith of its title*," (p. 78,) I should repeat, what I have already said with Dr. Carpenter, that allowing that the title *might* mislead, I will not allow that it was *intended to do so*.* You further observe, with respect to this obnoxious work, "acknowledging (it has been well remarked) that more than nine-tenths of the version is the Archbishop's own; the Editors virtually confess that nearly one-tenth is *not* his own. This one-tenth may exclude all the gospel peculiarities received by that respectable Prelate, whose name they have thus used as a decoy." *May exclude!* Such an insinuation is most unbecoming and unwarrantable. Before you ventured to repeat this injurious surmise, and thus

Spargere voces
In vulgum ambiguas.

it would have been well to have ascertained that your suspicion was justified. Common fairness required that you should state, not what gospel-peculiarities received by the Archbishop, the Improved Version *may* exclude; but what it *has* excluded. But sweeping censures are more easy and more convenient, on such occasions,

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* I have heard of a clergyman whose residence was much more sequestered than that of the gentleman to whom, I apprehend, the Archdeacon alludes, who was not misled by the title, but, with very commendable zeal, procured a copy, which he carefully locked up in his escritoir, that he might do all in his power to check the diffusion of what Archbishop Magee terms 'Unitarian blasphemies.'

than minute investigation and laboured proof. Dr. Carpenter, than whom no one, it is probable, has more patiently and candidly compared the Improved Version with its basis; nor more faithfully and impartially stated the result; informs us, that "there are not twenty verses in the whole work, in which the variations from the Primate's version have any close connexion with peculiarities of theological sentiment; that many of the alterations are those proposed by Newcome himself; and that the general spirit and character of the translation is decidedly Newcome's." (*Examination*, &c. p. 307.) And the sole responsible Editor of the Improved Version, in his Reply to the Quarterly Reviewer, who had wantonly asserted what you have groundlessly surmised, has observed: "The editors were under the necessity of introducing the Archbishop's name; and to guard against the possibility of its being mistaken as giving a sanction to their views, they have in every instance where they have departed from his text, scrupulously set down the Primate's version at the foot of the page. To state this fact, did not fall in with an honest Reviewer's design, for then what would have become of his charge of fraud and falsehood?" * Supposing, then, that what you imagine to be gospel-peculiarities, were so esteemed by Archbishop Newcome, and were to be found in his translation; and that all these were excluded by the Editors of the Improved Version, if they carefully marked the passages, in which

* *Monthly Repository*, Vol. IV. p. 375.—It is true that a few unacknowledged variations did occur in the first edition; but the friends of the Editor, "know, what," as Dr. Carpenter justly observes, "others have no reason to doubt, that the omission to mark them, must have been *utterly unintentional*." (*Examination*, &c. p. 309, 312.)

they departed from their basis, they cannot be justly accused of using the name of that respectable Prelate for any dishonourable purpose. They have fairly stated the motives by which they were induced to take his translation as the basis, and they have a right to be believed. You repeat, (p. 77,) what you had advanced in your former Charge, &c. that "even Dr. Carpenter regrets the non-adherence of the Editors to some standard text, as 'it would do away (he says) one of the most powerful charges brought against them, namely, *that they alter the Scriptures to suit their own system.*'" If you meant, by printing these words of Dr. Carpenter in italics, to lead your readers to suppose that this powerful charge is well founded, or that he thought it so; you have been guilty of misleading them. You do not, indeed here verbally follow your daring leader the Archbishop of Dublin, who scruples not to say that Dr. Carpenter "confesses and regrets that they (the Editors) have followed no standard text whatever; that is, in other words, that they have modified the text of the New Testament, just as they found it answerable to their purpose." Yet, if I mistake not, the spirit and design of your citation is precisely the same; and would be so understood by the majority of your readers. Of this remark by Dr. Carpenter, in his elaborate review of the Improved Version; a remark characteristic at once of that minute accuracy which is indispensable in biblical criticism, and of his unbiassed candour, very unfair advantage has been taken by Nares and Magee. And, if instead of trusting to their authority, you, Sir, had fully and impartially examined Dr. Carpenter's own statement on this subject in the *Monthly Repository*, Vol. IV. and in his

*Examination of Magee's Charges*, &c. App. C.; or, which would have been better still, if you had compared the fourth edition of the Improved Version with the second edition of Griesbach, you would not, perhaps, have thought it necessary or advisable to repeat this observation respecting the non-adherence of the Editors of the Improved Version to any standard text. You would have been convinced, that even in the first edition, the variations from the text of Griesbach's second edition, "*are, in general, of so minute a kind, that in themselves considered, they are of no consequence:*" and that in the fourth edition, the Editors, according to their declaration, "have endeavoured to reform the version, so as to bring it to a complete coincidence with Griesbach's text." *(See Advertisement to the fourth edition of Improved Version.)* Let it be acknowledged that in a very few instances, variations may still be found, the consequence either of inadvertency or design; these will not justify the conclusion, that they have modified the text just as they found it answerable to their purpose. Throughout the Gospels and the Acts, there is not a single instance of doctrinal importance, in which the Improved Version departs from Griesbach: and throughout the Epistles, there are but three, or perhaps, four such instances. These are, Rom. iii. 25, 1 Cor. xv. 47, 2 Tim. iii. 16, and perhaps 1 Cor. x. 9. And whoever will consult the Notes of the Editors on these passages, will find that they are not wholly discountenanced by Griesbach himself; nor absolutely unsupported by authorities.*

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* *See Carpenter's Exam. &c. p.* 401.

It was not without surprise and regret, that I lately saw at the head of

But I must pass on to a new count in your indictment of Unitarian impostors taken εκ του θυλακος, from the Green or Purple Bag of the Abp. of Dublin. "Under this same head of shameful artifice" you observe, (p. 78,) may be placed the 'unprincipled and treacherous' publication entitled 'Dr. Watts's Divine and Moral Songs for Children, revised and altered, so as to render them of general use; to which are added a short Catechism and Prayers. By Mrs. Trimmer.'" You have very properly referred in a note at the bottom of the page to "what has been said upon this subject by Dr. Carpenter himself in his '*Examination*,' pp. 50—54;" and could I persuade myself that they who read your Charge or Abp. Magee's Work, would turn to your reference, I should take no further notice of this alleged shameful artifice. But as some of those into whose hands these pages may fall, may not have the means of

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one of three printed lists of books recommended to the clergy *after* their ordination, by the Archdeacon of Cleveland, *Novum Testamentum à Valpy*: the only Greek Testament in the lists, excepting that in Walton's Bib. Polygl. Yet we are informed by one who has most carefully examined this Edition, *(Carpenter ubi sup. App. C.)* and who has produced abundant evidence of the truth of his assertion, that it "presents a *mangled text*"; in the forming of which "the *ratio testimoniorum* has been always overbalanced by the *analogia fidei*."

If Valpy's edition was recommended in the second list on account of the notes, surely Griesbach's (which a competent judge, (*Bp. Marsh's Lectures, No.* viii.) has declared "should be used by every biblical scholar") might have been expected to find a place in the third. But Griesbach's text is adopted by Unitarians; and therefore by zealous Trinitarians it must be condemned to an Index expurgatorius. Such is the spirit of high Churchism in all ages. The Jews began to be dissatisfied with the Septuagint, when the Christians cited it; and the Roman Catholics preferred a version to the original text, when Protestants appealed to the latter.

consulting Dr. Carpenter on the subject, I will spend a few words upon it. If a book, with such a title do exist, or ever have existed, it is the height of injustice to make the Unitarians at large answerable for its unpardonable disingenuousness. As a body they know nothing of it. You, Sir, I am persuaded, have never seen this book, and have no further acquaintance with it, than what you have derived from the "*Discourses, &c.*" of Magee; or I would call upon you to specify the date of its publication, and the name of the printer. Dr. Carpenter had never seen it; and when he applied to the secretary of the London Unitarian Society, who, from various circumstances, was the most likely man among us to obtain the book for him, he found that even "he could learn nothing respecting it." I have been a subscriber to that society almost from the time of its commencement, and have circulated a great number of the tracts published by it; but amongst them all I have never met with one bearing that title. Nor can I learn that it has been seen by any other Unitarian. I have now before me a small tract which is one of those published by the London Unitarian Society; and copies of which I have for many years been accustomed to distribute. The whole of the title is as follows: "Dr. Watts' Hymns and Moral Songs, for the Use of Children, revised and altered by a Lady. To which are added, Prayers for the Use of Children. The fifth edition. 'Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it.'—Proverbs xxii. 6. London: Printed for the Unitarian Society, and sold by D. Eaton, High Holborn. 1809."—There is nothing artful in this title: for it contains the word *Unitarian*, which as you yourself

acknowledge, is sufficient to "protect the public from being betrayed into fatal error:" and in the preface, the editor most distinctly states the grounds on which the alterations are made. This is the only revised and altered edition of Dr. Watts' Hymns and Moral Songs, that the Unitarians have published: they ought not, therefore, to bear the guilt of that other, described by Abp. Magee, of which, so far as I can learn, they know nothing. Though you are little disposed to be liberal and just to Unitarians, I will not believe that you can be so unjust as to visit upon them generally, the sin of some unknown individual.*

Your next censure falls upon the revered and guileless confessor Lindsey. "Nor will I leave," (you declare, p. 78,) wholly unnoticed the 'trick' played off under the mask of Dr. S. Clarke. Dr. C's interleaved Book of Common Prayer, deposited by his Son in the British Museum in 1768, is represented to retain, both in the Doxology and in the commencement of the Li-

* Deceptive titles deserve unqualified censure and reprobation; and no effort of mine should be employed to screen a Unitarian who should be convicted of using such deception. But no sect should suffer from the indiscreet or dishonourable zeal of any one of its members. As the Archdeacon appears to have consulted Dr. Carpenter's Examination, he may have there met with the following curious anecdote, which for the benefit of others, as it is connected with the above charge against Unitarians, I will transcribe: "The brother of the Rev. Prebendary (Dennis) during the Exeter controversy (in 1814) put forth a twopenny tract, entitled *The Athanasian Creed Examined*, by *A Rational Christian*: and he cited in the title, with my name, a passage from one of my Letters, in which was quoted Archbishop Tillotson's well-known declaration respecting that Creed, viz. that he wished the Church well rid of it. Altogether, he publication seemed to come from the Socinian heretics. The Preface, however set things to rights: since the Rev. John Dennis spoke of the excellent Tillotson as another Judas who betrayed his Master, and, subjoining his own

tany, the names of the Three Divine Persons (and, in the latter, the three-fold invocation) as well as the service for Trinity Sunday; with a doxology appended to the Thanksgiving from the Apocalypse, implying a more solemn worship of Christ than that which is at present in use. And yet the Unitarian Prayer-Book, which however I have never seen, is said to be entitled by its successive editors, Lindsey and Belsham, 'The Book of Common Prayer, *reformed according to the plan of the late Dr. Samuel Clarke.*'" And so this very serious charge of practising deceit in the important and momentous concern of framing a work to be used in the worship of that omniscient Being, who delighteth in sincerity, is brought on the ground of hearsay and conjecture alone, against a man whose life was a pattern of Christian simplicity, who in all his transactions was scrupulously sincere and upright, and who for the sake of truth and conscience, sacrificed the reasonable expectation of "palaces and purple and preferment." All that you know of Dr. Clarke's MS. is from the repre-

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name, gave us to understand that he thus fought under false colours, because he thought his tract would not otherwise be read by the Unitarians. If he had entitled it *A Defence of the Athanasian Creed*, many more of us would have read it, if it had been only for the novelty of the thing. In the abundance of his zeal, Mr. Dennis sent copies to some of the neighbouring clergymen, with '*From the Author*' in the title-page. One of his friends, presuming from the title that it was a Unitarian production, and that I had sent it, (a liberty to which I had no claim,) transmitted it immediately to me, unopened, with a civil note, informing me that he did not choose to read what might unsettle his mind as to the ritual which he was bound to observe." *Carpenter's Examination, &c. p.* 303, *note.*—The Archdeacon of Cleveland, if consistent, will place this "unprincipled and treacherous" publication of the Rev. J. Dennis, under the head of "shameful artifice"; but he may be assured that no Unitarian would conclude, after the example and in the spirit of his Archiepiscopal oracle, that '*such are* TRINITARIAN *practices.*

sentation of others; the Unitarian Liturgy you seem to think it meritorious not to have seen, and yet you pronounce the title of the latter to be a 'trick.' I will not venture to express the feelings which such conduct excites in my breast. Every truly candid mind will share them with me. I also have never seen Dr. Clarke's interleaved copy of the Common Prayer, but I have now before me a list of his proposed alterations, on which I can confidently rely, and which differs most materially from your statement. In his "*Apology on resigning the Vicarage of Catterick*," p. 199, 4th edit. speaking of this work by Dr. Clarke, which he had evidently examined with great care, Mr. Lindsey observes: "The amendments of the Liturgy proposed by *Dr. Clarke*, chiefly relate to the right direction of prayer and thanksgiving to its only object, the one living and true God, as taught by our Lord Jesus Christ; not but that he has made some very considerable improvements, in other respects, as he passed along. It was no small satisfaction, *in the perusal of them*, to find that those parts of our public service, which had long seemed to me to countenance an unscriptural, and therefore, unlawful, forbidden worship, i. e. the offering up of prayer to any but the one true God, the Father, were *all of them* either cancelled or altered by this eminent person." Then follows "*A list of exceptionable parts of the Liturgy with respect to the object of worship; all of which are either quite struck out or changed, by Dr. Clarke.*" From this list,* the accuracy of which I have no reason to suspect, though with your

* Transcribed from the copy of Dr. Clarke's MS. in the Brit. Museum. See *Conversations on Christian Idolatry*, p. 136.

wonted candour, you may call this also 'a trick', I find that the Doxology, 'Glory be to the Father,' &c. is "struck out, and changed wherever it is ordered to be read": that the commencement of the Litany is changed, and the whole addressed to "one God the Father"; that the collect for Trinity Sunday is "changed," and that the Preface upon the feast of the Trinity is "struck out." No notice is taken of any Doxology appended to the Thanksgiving, but if, as it has been represented to you, one has been added from the Apocalypse, however you may interpret it, I am confident, Dr. Clarke would not consider it as "implying a more solemn worship of Christ than that which is at present in use."* It is indeed highly improbable that he should insert a Doxology which he believed to be of such a character, when, as Mr. Whiston informs us, he attempted "to alter the forms of Doxology of the singing Psalms for his parish of St. James's," desiring to introduce "To God, through Christ his Son, our Lord, All glory be," instead of "To Father, Son, and Holy

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* We are told, indeed, in a note, (*Charge, &c. p.* 79,) that Whiston himself in his *Memoirs* of Dr. Clarke affirms, 'that he never found occasion to suspect him of thinking that the Son was not to be properly invoked or worshipped', or, as Whiston himself has with somewhat more precision expressed it, "worshipped or invoked." But how does Mr. Whiston proceed? "Mr. Emlyn also assures me, that he had heard him say that the *subordinate* worship and invocation of the Son, which Mr. Emlyn had vindicated in a distinct Treatise, was, by Dr. Clarke, owned to be proved by him to a demonstration." (*Memoirs*, p. 145.) Is the worship paid to the Son, according to the Book of Common Prayer, *subordinate*? Whoever knows any thing of Arianism, or has read that Treatise by Mr. Emlyn, to which Mr. W. here refers, will understand what Dr. Clarke meant by *worshipping*, or *invoking the Son*. According to the conclusion of the well-known epigram by Dr. Bentley,

"Ille colit *Dominum*, quem negat esse *Deum*."

Ghost, Immortal glory be."* "His amendments in the Book of Common Prayer," Mr. Lindsey observes, in another place, (*Lindsey's Hist. View, p.* 362,) "plainly shew that he disapproved the offering up of prayer to Christ in the public assemblies of Christians, as he has blotted out all those passages where there is any invocation of him." This remark is in perfect conformity with the spirit of several of the propositions in "The Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity," and particularly with his Observations on the Liturgy at the end of the *Second Edition* of that Work.

Your information respecting the title of the Unitarian Prayer Book is correct; and I maintain that it is a fair and honest title. "The Form of Public Prayer, in use at the chapel in Essex-Street," says the first and excellent Editor, "was mostly compiled from Dr. Clarke's Reformed Common Prayer-Book...And this choice was made by the preacher in the chapel, because, although in some things he differed in sentiment from that excellent person, yet the amendments made by him, in respect of the great and sole object of worship, were such as he entirely approved, and believed to be the truth. For the Doctor has thrown out all those passages in the Liturgy of the Church of England, in which prayer is addressed to Christ, or to the Holy Spirit, or any other, but the person of the one true God, and Father of all."† Surely this is sufficient to justify the title,

* *Whiston's Memoirs of Dr. Clarke, p.* 98. This attempt was frustrated by the opposition of the Bishop of London, who wrote a letter to the incumbents of his diocese, "in a most flagrant clause" of which, as Whiston says, he cautioned them against using it.—Ib. p. 99.

† *Histor. View, &c. p.* 235.

and to save the upright, conscientious Lindsey from the disgraceful imputation of "playing off a trick under the mask of Dr. S. Clarke." He acknowledges, indeed, himself, in the midst of the passage which I have transcribed above, that "as some other alterations were admitted, which were however signified at the time to the public, the title would have been more just, if it had been called 'The Book of Common Prayer Reformed, in which Dr. Clarke's Amendments have been chiefly followed.'"—This title may be more accurate; it is not more just in a moral point of view. For the Unitarian Prayer Book is strictly 'according to the form of Dr. Clarke's.' That phrase does not imply an exact transcript of the original, but only a general accordance in form and substance; and such an accordance with its model, will be found in the professed copy. The plan of Dr. Clarke was so to alter and amend the Book of Common Prayer, as that God the Father should be the sole object of worship; and such is the plan of the Unitarian Liturgy: "It is the Liturgy of the Church of England with the amendments of Dr. Clarke," and all further alterations introduced by the Editor, are the same in spirit and design. *

It might have been naturally expected that you would not renew your accusations of Dr. Priestley, after the ample refutation of those which were advanced in your former Charge. But your appetite for

* I have heard of more than one instance of persons professing to be members of the Church of England, and openly attending its services, using as the manual of their public devotions "The Book of Common Prayer, reformed according to the plan of the late Dr. S. Clarke:"

—monstrum infelix sacratâ sistimus arce!

cavilling at Unitarians, and especially at this distinguished advocate of their cause, seems to be insatiable.

"Non missura cutem, nisi plena cruoris, hirudo."

Though past experience has evidently taught you more caution than you once possessed, you are not yet perfect in this necessary qualification in a controversialist, especially if he appear as "an accuser of the brethren." Perhaps you knew that by the generality of those for whom you catered, whatever you put before them would be thankfully received, and no questions asked. I must, however, endeavour to convince them that a little inquiry might be not improper or useless. I must again vindicate the illustrious object of your unceasing reprehension, at the hazard of being stigmatized as eminently sophistical; and of being sneered at, for diffusing my arguments over several pages. *

From the abundant specimens of Dr. Priestley's temerity of assertion, his ignorance of the Greek language, &c. &c. which it would not have been difficult to adduce, you say, (p. 80,) "I could easily have cited" (and to show how easily you could, you do actually cite) "1. His complex observation that, rather than concur with his friend Dr. Price on the subject of Christ's pre-existence, (founded on *John* vi. 62,) 'he would much

* See *Charge*, &c. 1823, *p.* 77. In the former Charge, &c. (p. 63,) a similar sarcasm was levelled at Mr. Cappe, for having occupied ninety-six pages in his critical examination of the first eighteen verses of the first chapter of John. The Archdeacon of Cleveland, like John Edwards, who complained of Mr. Locke's "*tedious* collection out of the four Evangelists," seems, as Mr. L. says, "to take the height of an author's parts, (in inverse ratio I suppose,) by numbering the pages of his book."

sooner have recourse to the idea of his *actual ascent into heaven!* Or of his imagining that he had been carried up thither in a vision, which (like that of Paul) *he had not been able to distinguish from a reality!* at the time that he received his commission; or dispute the correctness of John's recollection and representation of our Lord's language! or conceive the whole verse to be an interpolation! or believe that the old apostle dictated one thing, and his amanuensis wrote another!'" Exhibited in this detached form, this "complex observation" is well adapted to startle your readers, and to confirm their prejudices against this much misrepresented writer. Upon this citation I must beg leave to dwell a little, not only for the purpose of vindicating Dr. Priestley from the insinuation which is here evidently intended to be conveyed, that to get rid of a Scripture doctrine, which he did not like to receive, he would "fabricate," or adopt "any theory," however groundless or absurd; but also of showing that the principle of interpretation which he has avowed in this case is approved and acted upon by the most orthodox interpreters.

Dr. Price had said "that *John* vi. 62 'What if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before?' is a decisive declaration of Christ's pre-existence by himself as words can well express." Dr. Priestley could not consider it in this light. "The whole discourse, he observes, in which this expression, on which you lay so much stress occurs, is full of the strongest figures,—a discourse in which nothing is expressed in a natural manner. Besides, the literal interpretation of this very passage, does not, in reality, accord with the sentiments of *Arians*, or any sect of Christians, except

those of the *Polish Socinians:* for it would imply that *the human nature of Christ* had been in heaven; because it is said, not that the *Son of God*, but *the Son of Man* had been there. Besides the phrase, *where he was before*, is not synonymous to *heaven*, nor is the *time* when the Son of Man was there, or any where else, mentioned in this passage; so that much must be *supplied* before it can be made to say much to your purpose." He then adds, "Though I reject your interpretation of this text, I do not pretend to be quite satisfied with any other interpretation of it. I am, however, abundantly satisfied that your's is not the true one. And this is far from being the only text about which the best critics cannot entirely please themselves. For my part, I should much sooner have recourse to the idea of Christ's actual ascent into heaven, or of his imagining that he had been carried up thither, in a vision, which (like that of *Paul*) he had not been able to distinguish from a reality, at the time that he received his commission, than to your's, of his having existed in an unembodied state before the creation of the world, and of his having left some state of great dignity and happiness, when he came hither."* And now, Sir, what is there in this to call for your significant and portentous Italics and notes of admiration? For reasons which he has assigned, and I strongly suspect, that you cannot demonstrate them to be weak and insufficient, Dr. Priestley could not adopt the literal interpretation of this passage, and the doctrine grounded upon it by his friend Dr. Price. He states other possible interpretations, which indeed he could

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* *Letters to Dr. Price. Works, Vol. xviii. 439, &c.*

not approve, but which would, he thought, be less objectionable. Is there any thing absurd or reprehensible in this? He then assigns some other reasons which induce him to "think that this *hypothesis* is no proper clue to our Lord's real meaning;" insisting, principally, upon the silence of the apostles, with respect to their discovery of the pre-existent dignity of Christ, and the absence of all traces of the impression which such a discovery must have made upon their minds, and of any marks in the *Acts of the Apostles*, of the unbelieving Jews having so much as heard of such an opinion being advanced by any Christians. "It is as evident," he observes, "from this consideration, as any negative can be, that no such opinion as that of Christ having been the maker of the world, was ever taught by the apostles; and therefore any interpretation of their writings which implies their teaching it, must be wrong, whether we be able to hit upon the true sense of them or not.—To be explicit with you, I would not, as you say, build 'an article of faith of such magnitude, on the correctness of John's recollection and representation of our Lord's language.' So strange and incredible does your *hypothesis* appear to me, that rather than admit it, I would suppose the whole verse to be an interpolation, or that the old apostle dictated one thing, and his *amanuensis* wrote another; for you would not scruple to say as much, if you had found any passage, in which it was said that *Moses*, or any of the old prophets had been the maker of the world." Here again Dr. P. only states these positions as alternatives to which he should find himself reduced, rather than adopt an *hypothesis*, which he regards as inconsistent with the tenor of the Scriptures: but he is far from actually adopting or ap-

proving them. He only declares what he should do in such a choice of difficulties. *

With respect to his objection to a literal interpretation of this much-controverted passage; no consistent Protestant can find in it any ground for censure. He is as much at liberty to call the language of our Lord, in this place, figurative, as any Protestant interpreter has to consider the phrases of "eating my flesh," and "drinking my blood," in this very chapter, figurative. What I would directly insist upon is, that in this, and in similar instances, which have brought upon him severe but unmerited censure, he is guided by the generally-admitted rule of interpretation, *the analogy of faith.* † This analogy will not, indeed, appear the same to all; yet it will naturally, and, under due regulations and restrictions, which it is not my business here to lay down, not improperly influence the decision of interpreters with respect to doubtful passages. There is unquestionably, "considerable difficulty in collecting the genuine tenor of Scripture doctrine; great danger of substituting in the place of it, pre-conceived and precarious opinions, and of wresting particular passages,

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* If these alternatives are to be regarded as so unbecoming and offensive, what are we to think of that laid down by one of Dr. Priestley's earliest opponents, the Rev. Mr. Venn, who declared that if Dr. P. should prove his opinions to be true, he would "burn his Bible as a book of lies, and a heap of impious nonsense." Little as Unitarians are too commonly supposed to reverence the Scriptures, they, with Dr. Priestley, "cannot help being shocked at such expressions." *See Priestley's Letter to the Rev. H. Venn.*

† This phrase, it must be confessed, is improperly borrowed from *Rom.* xii. 6. (*See Campbell's Prel. Diss. p.* 112.) Yet the use of it may be allowed as very fitly expressing a principle adopted by interpreters of every sect.

in order to reconcile them to these;" *(See Gerard's Institutes*, &c. p. 161,) and therefore, the greatest care and caution are necessary in applying this rule; yet still it is not, on these accounts, to be neglected. "Wherever any doctrine is manifest, either from the whole tenor of Divine Revelation, or from its scope, it must not be weakened or set aside by a few obscure passages; nor must an obscure, doubtful, ambiguous, or figurative text be interpreted in such a sense as to make it contradict a plain one: for, in explaining the Scriptures, consistency of sense and principles ought to be supported in all their several parts; and if any one part be so interpreted as to clash with another, such interpretation cannot be justified." *(See Horne's Introd.* Vol. I. p. 355, 358, first edit.) Let the remarks of Dr. Priestley in that Letter to Dr. Price, from which you have selected the present article of crimination against him, be examined by this rule, and they will not be deemed by any impartial judge, instances of ignorance or temerity. He conscientiously regarded, (whether justly or not, I have not now to inquire,) the whole tenor of the Scriptures of the New Testament, as inculcating the doctrine of the simple and perfect humanity of Jesus Christ, with which, of course, the doctrine of his pre-existence is utterly inconsistent: he was fully persuaded, indeed, after what he thought the most careful and unprejudiced examination of them, that "this is the only sense that can be put upon them without torture." To interpret, therefore, the obscure and figurative passage cited by his friend from John vi. 62, as proving the pre-existence of Jesus, he concluded, would be to contradict the analogy of faith, and to oppose the whole tenor of Divine Revelation. What else could he in

such a state of mind, say, but that rather than assent to the interpretation of his friend, and the hypothesis founded on it, and thus make the Scriptures inconsistent with themselves, he would adopt any theory, any mode of explanation, which had been, or should be proposed.

Though they may not choose to avow it with the same freedom, Trinitarian expositors unquestionably proceed upon the same principles in their interpretation of those passages of Scripture, which, separately considered, they must own, teach the doctrine of the simple humanity of Jesus Christ. Believing the whole tenor of the Scriptures to inculcate the doctrine of the Trinity, and consequently that of the divine nature of Christ, they hold themselves bound to explain such passages, according to what they deem *the analogy of faith:* and to this end they adopt a theory, which to say the least, is as little supported by any express words of the sacred writers, as forced, as groundless, and as absurd, as you may consider any of those alternatives proposed by Dr. Priestley, and which have provoked your astonishment and indignation. To make Scripture, as they think, consistent with itself, they are compelled to feign the hypothesis, that Jesus Christ was possessed of two natures, a human and a divine. Take, for instance, what, if they were employed on our side, you would perhaps call "miserable shifts", the methods adopted by Trinitarian expositors, to reconcile, with their system, the declaration of our Lord, *Mark* xiii. 32., *But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven,* NEITHER THE SON, *but the Father.* "Here," says the Unitarian, "we have 'as decisive a declaration of Christ's perfect humanity as

words can well express.'"—"No," says the Trinitarian, "rather than adopt this hypothesis, which contradicts the general sense of Scripture, I would suppose this clause, '*neither the Son*,' to be an interpolation; * or that our Lord spoke merely in his official capacity, and of knowledge received by communication; † or that the verb *knoweth*, is here used in the Hebrew manner, for, *maketh to know*, or *declareth*; ‡ or that Jesus was both God and man; and here spoke in his human nature only." This last is the hypothesis most generally adopted; but can any thing be more absurd than to suppose that a Being in whose nature Deity and Humanity are held to have been so intimately united, as to form one Person, could, as to one part of himself, be omniscient, and as to another part, possessed of very limited foresight? Can any thing be more libellous on the character of our blessed Lord, than to say of him, that at the very time that his words led those who heard him, to conclude, that he was absolutely and entirely ignorant of "that day and hour," he was conscious that there was a sense in which he did clearly and fully know them. Dr. Priestley must be held up to scorn or censure, for supposing that the recollection of an aged apostle might not be correct; while you and your orthodox brethren, without hesitation represent Him, 'in whose mouth was no guile,' descending to duplicity and equivocation. Is not this, to behold the mote that is in thy brother's eye, and not to consider the beam that is in thine own eye? "First take out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."

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* *Dr. A. Clarke in loc.*

† *Wardlaw's Unitarianism incapable of Vindication.*

‡ *Macknight.*

The next count in your new indictment shall be dismissed in a few words: in truth, it scarcely deserves notice. "You could have cited," you say, (p. 81,) "his disingenuous advice to Lindsey, on his conscientiously meditating the resignation of the Vicarage of Catterick, to 'make what alterations he thought proper in the offices of the Church': viz. those offices, by which he had pledged himself to abide; 'and to leave it to his superiors to dismiss him, if they chose!'" You might have observed that he has had the ingenuousness to record this 'disingenuous advice,' in his own Memoirs, with this remark subjoined: "But his better judgment, and greater fortitude, led him to give up all connexion with the established Church of his own accord."—The advice, I am confident, would never have proceeded from him, had he regarded it as in any degree inconsistent with perfect sincerity and candour; for no man ever more highly valued these qualities in others, or more uniformly displayed them in his own temper and conduct. Nor do I see how this advice can be so regarded. Had he indeed remonstrated with his friend, as others did, "for being so singularly nice and scrupulous as not to comply with what wiser and better men could accommodate themselves to:" had he joined in suggesting to him, "that he was not the author or the contriver of the things imposed and complained of; that all he did was ministerial only, in submission to civil authority, which is, within certain limitations, the authority of God, and which had imposed these things only for peace and public good; that he ought not only to leave his benefice, but to go out of the world, if he expected a perfect state of things, in which there was no flaw or hardship; that if there was a general tendency in what was established, to serve the interest of virtue

and true religion, he ought to rest satisfied, and wait for a change in other incidental matters that were grievous to him, but not generally felt by others; that in the mean time he had it in his power to forward the desired work, by preparing men's minds for it, whenever there should be a disposition in the state to rectify what was amiss; and that therefore, if he could in *any way of interpretation* reconcile the prescribed forms with the Scripture in his own mind, and make himself easy, he was not only justified, but to be commended:"* If such had been his counsel also to this venerable confessor, not one word would I offer in his defence. But his advice was, that he should act openly and ingenuously; and being a Unitarian, he should not conceal it from his parishioners or the world, but assume to himself the power of reforming the public service in his own Church, according to his own principles. If his superiors, who could not fail to be quickly informed of this proceeding, allowed it, he was absolved from his former engagement; if not, the removal of an exemplary minister from a station in which he was eminently useful, was a deed for which they would be answerable. Better advice, as Dr. Priestley himself acknowledges, might have been given; but it cannot be rightly denominated "disingenuous." As to the violation of the 'pledge to abide by the offices of the Church,' according to the advice of Dr. Priestley, it was a matter of trial whether

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* *Belsham's Memoirs of Lindsey, p.* 21, 22. Has not the Archdeacon of Cleveland known those who have soothed their consciences by such suggestions as these; who, differing in opinion, little, if at all, from the upright Vicar of Catterick, have nevertheless performed the services, and received the emoluments, of a Trinitarian establishment? Of what Church did *Gregory Blunt* himself, live and die professedly a member?

the bishop to whom it was given, would insist upon it's being observed; and it could not but be well known that a certain latitude in the interpretation of it is not denied.* It is in fact violated by all those clergymen (and I am persuaded, Sir, you well know that the number of them is not small) who neglect to read the Athanasian Creed on the days appointed by the rubric.† And an apostle has declared that "whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all." In such a case, then, as the present, "let him that is without sin, cast the first stone."

Dr. Priestley's "daring position that 'our Saviour misunderstood and misapplied the Prophecies of the Old Testament relating to the Messiah' which even Mr. Belsham allows 'looks like an attack upon his veracity, and is little less than charging him with vanity and arrogance,'" furnishes the next subject of your crimination. In professing to be the advocate of Dr. Priestley, I by no means undertake the defence or justification of every position which he has advanced. My great

* The Rev. W. Hopkins, an avowed Arian, and Vicar of Bolney in Sussex, "made himself easy in his continuance in the Church, by omitting some things in the service, and making alterations in others." Thus, in the Litany he left out the third and fourth invocations, and changed the second, &c. His diocesan, Sir W. Ashburnham, never listened to any complaints against him for his nonconformity; but on the contrary, sometimes distinguished him in public, by his kind and particular notice. See *Lindsey's Conver. on Christian Idolatry, Introd. p. ix.*

† If I be correctly informed, this creed, which every clergyman "pledges" himself to say or sing thirteen times in every year, is read in very few of the two and twenty churches in York; and I have been told, that even in the Cathedral, which has the honour of having one of its stalls filled by the Archdeacon of Cleveland, on two high festivals, at least, it has been lately omitted! By whose "disingenuous advice" this innovation has been introduced I know not.

object is to prevent the misconceptions which such partial statements as those which you borrow from Abp. Magee and others, are calculated to create, and by exhibiting what may be said on his behalf, to enable our readers to arrive at a fairer conclusion. Since this position was disapproved even by those who, believing in the simple humanity of Christ, were not unprepared to admit that he might be subject to the natural infirmities of human nature, it cannot be otherwise than offensive to those who ascribe to him, as his own, all the perfections of Deity. And, though with Dr. Carpenter, (who has fairly and candidly considered this charge in his 'Examination' of Magee,) I think that Dr. P. did right in fearlessly pursuing truth, I also regret that he did not, in the *communication of opinion* sufficiently weigh the effects. "Till he had satisfied himself, by repeated and deliberate examination, and by reviewing them in their different bearings, that his opinions on this subject were well founded, it would, to say the least, have been wise, to confine them to those who would regard them only as materials for thinking." (*Carpenter's Examination, &c. p.* 210.) It is probable, indeed, that it was, with some such view that Dr. Priestley composed the paper in which this obnoxious passage occurs. It is entitled 'Observations on the Inspiration of Christ,' and was published in the Theological Repository, a work suggested by himself, and designed to afford to writers of all denominations, the means of freely discussing all subjects of theology. In the Introduction to this paper, he declares that he shall give free scope in it to his *speculations*, and observes, "If no doubt be ever proposed, and no freedom of speculation indulged, an entire stop will soon be put to our progress in all useful knowledge;" and he thus closes his 'Observations':

"I wish to hear what your learned and liberal readers may object to this Essay, as well as to those which have preceded it; both that I myself may form a more decided judgment of what I have, perhaps too hastily, advanced, as well as be directed in my future disquisitions. I feel myself disposed to give free scope to my thoughts, and I am the less concerned in this unrestrained course of inquiry, as there will always, I hope, be some to hold the reins and check me; and if the bridle be in a steady and able hand, I hope I shall never be unwilling to obey it." (*Theol. Rep.* Vol. II. p. 461. *Works*, Vol. III. 347, 364.)

If there be any one subject in the whole compass of theological inquiry peculiarly encumbered with difficulties, it is that which relates to the application of the prophecies of the Old Testament, to the persons and events mentioned in the New Testament. He who is insensible to these difficulties, I will venture to assert, has never paid to this important subject the attention it demands. And no real theologian of a liberal spirit, would endeavour to excite or keep alive prejudices against another, especially if he had given indubitable evidence of his being a believer in Divine Revelation, by exposing to the censure of those who cannot be supposed to know all the perplexities of the subject, any speculations into which his inquiries may have led him. The thanks of the Christian world, Sir, will be eminently due, and willingly given to you, if you will employ your leisure and your learning in clearing away all the obscurities, in which the numerous answerers of Collins, and others since their day, have left this interesting

topic still involved. And the satisfaction resulting from the accomplishment of this work will, I have no doubt, be far greater than any you can derive from the recollection of having laboured to destroy the reputation of one who, however mistaken he may have been, had no other object in view by all his writings, than to diffuse the knowledge of truth, and to promote the practice of virtue.

Of your fourth citation, or, "his miserable equivocations in trying to get over his blunder about Bishop Bull's supposed defence of the Damnatory Clause in the Athanasian Creed," &c. I shall here take no notice; all that it can require has been said in my former *Letters*. Your repetition of this charge, only shews that, notwithstanding all your boasting to the contrary, you are reduced to no little difficulty in finding matter of plausible abuse and censure. Nor will I waste many words in proving that neither Dr. Priestley nor his "zealous apologist" have dealt craftily in the matter of his retractation of the "somewhat strong" epithet by which he designated the Mosaic account of the creation and fall. Granting that the terms, *a lame account* and *an imperfect account*, are perfectly synonymous, yet the impression they make on the mind of a reader is by no means the same. The former may give great offence, where little or none would be occasioned by the latter; and on that ground alone, Dr. Priestley regretted that he had not employed the inoffensive term. If in substituting the one for the other he intended to act *craftily*, it is strange that he had not the art to conceal his craftiness, by withholding the acknowledgment that both terms had the same

meaning. But he had no intention to deceive; he was at all times superior to such meanness. He wished not unnecessarily to offend. In the very next sentence to that in which he retracts the offensive term, he maintains the opinion he had before avowed, that the Mosaic account is an imperfect one, not being derived from Revelation, but "his *own*, and consequently, the best that he could collect from tradition." Perhaps you will still cry *Hem, astutia!* Be it so; I appeal to the impartial.

I must not so lightly pass over what you next say you could have easily cited: viz. "5. The unguarded avowal of his views, *extending beyond the removal of the difficulties of revelation*, which probably among other causes, induced Dr. Carpenter to characterize him as fearlessly 'indulging in speculations, the results of which a more cautious lover of free inquiry and truth would have kept to himself;' and led the light-minded Geddes to represent the theological chemist (by an adoption of his own metaphor) as employed

*'Subtilia grana parare,*
*Church quibus et Churchmen in cœlum up-blowere posset.'*"

To which you add in a note, "That the up-blow of the Church, however, was not the only one meditated, appears to have been the deliberate judgment of one of our highest tribunals; which refused to indemnify Dr. Priestley for the destruction of some literary property, upon the principle that the law could afford no protection to works written *against the morals and religion of the country*. 'To disprove a property

in these MSS. (said Lord C. J. Eyre,) as to the value of which, direct evidence had been given, the tendency of anterior publications was all that was required.' Whatever may be thought of the maxim, what was thought of Dr. Priestley's 'anterior publications' is perfectly clear."—That you should again with such apparent satisfaction, allude to the disastrous and disgraceful outrages committed by the Birmingham rioters, which it would become every Englishman, and especially every one anxious for the credit of the established Church, to bury in oblivion, is a melancholy instance of the baneful effects of religious prejudice. The wanton destruction, in one hour of darkness, by the hands of an ignorant, misguided, and ferocious rabble, of the fruits of many years of literary and scientific labour, is a subject, surely, not for secret or ill-concealed exultation, but for deep and lively sympathy. That only a partial and very inadequate redress could be obtained for such wrongs, and that owing, in no slight degree, to the operation of prejudice and passion, where the most strict impartiality and coolness ought to have prevailed, is a circumstance which every friend of his country, and every one accustomed to admire the usual administration of English justice, will never cease to lament. * If you have correctly reported the observation of Lord C. J. Eyre, on that occasion, it will be difficult for any one of correct principles not to suspect, however unwillingly, that he who sat on a British tribunal, to judge after the law, commanded

* See *Dr. Priestley's Appeal to the Public on the Riots in Birmingham.* He who can read that work without pitying his sufferings, admiring his fortitude and piety, and blushing for his country, is little worthy of the name of Christian or of Man.

the innocent and already injured victim of persecution "to be smitten contrary to the law."* A layman, and particularly one so occupied by professional engagements, as the Judge to whom you refer, may be well conceived not to have it in his power by his own personal examination, to have formed a correct opinion of Dr. Priestley's 'anterior publications;' but you, Sir, cannot plead the same excuse for ignorance, and therefore, it was not for you to throw out such insinuations respecting the "extension of his views," or to sanction the unfounded charge that he had "written works against the morals and the religion of the country." I defy you, Sir, to substantiate this gross accusation. It is a libel upon a man who had, from his youth up, a deep sense of religion upon his own mind, who made it his first concern, in imitation of his revered Master, to do the will of God with fidelity, and to bear his will

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* Some of my readers may possibly be here reminded of a truly eloquent, and a truly British Sermon, preached in the Cathedral Church of St. Peter, York, before the Judges, at the last Lent Assizes, by a Clergyman, whose distinguished talents and energetic pen have been long, and uniformly, and successfully devoted to the support and diffusion of the most liberal and enlightened principles; who, claiming for himself the right of private judgment, seeks not to deter others from the exercise of that invaluable privilege, by joining in the clamours of bigotry, by traducing their motives, or by exciting against them the suspicion or the contempt of the world. *O si sic omnes.*—I wish I could refer my readers to the whole passage in that admirable Sermon in which the preacher dwells upon the obligation of "a Christian judge in a free land, to guard himself from the influence of party feelings," by submitting to which, "he who ought to be cool, is heated; he who ought to be neutral, is partial: the ermine of justice is spotted; the balance of justice is unpoised; the fillet of justice is torn off: and he who sits to judge after the law, smites contrary to the law." But I regret to say that the Sermon is only printed, it is *not published.*

with pious resignation; whose moral character the foulest breath of calumny could not tarnish, and whose chief desire and most persevering endeavour it was to purify religion, that its efficacy might be more powerful on the hearts and conduct of men. Give to these slanderous insinuations some perceptible shape, some tangible form: produce the works of this eminent person, on which you would join with the unrighteous judge, to stamp this frightful stigma of being written *against the morals and religion of the country.* I anticipate, in part, your answer: 'He attacked the ecclesiastical establishment of the country.' I allow it. He, like many other good men, both before and after him, conscientiously believed that an ecclesiastical establishment is an anti-christian corruption, and injurious rather than favourable to the religious improvement of a people; and as it became him, with such views, he zealously endeavoured to exhibit this important subject to others in the light in which he regarded it. But will this support your charge? Will you venture, at this time of day, to identify the *morals or the religion of the country,* with it's ecclesiastical establishment? If you do, you will bring the religion and the morality of the country within comparatively narrow limits; and degrade to the class of the irreligious and the immoral, many of the most pious and conscientious members of the community.

As to Dr. Stonhouse's assertion, (p. 83,) that "Priestley was one of the most mischievous men in religion, politics, and chicanery, this nation ever knew; a proud, passionate, conceited man;" it deserves nothing more or better than a direct contradiction. They who know

any thing of the history of mankind, well know how to appreciate such assertions. All who contradict established errors, either in religion or politics, but especially in the former, will be sure to have a bad name from those who are friends to "things as they are." I need not remind you, Sir, that the early Christians were generally branded by the Pagans, as atheists and enemies of the human race; that the apostles were charged by Demetrius of Ephesus with endeavouring to turn the world upside down: that Paul was accused by Tertullus, at Cæsarea, before Festus the Roman governor, of being a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition; and that Pontius Pilate was threatened with being denounced as no friend to Cæsar, if he suffered Jesus, the falsely reputed enemy and rival of Cæsar, to live!

Weary as I am, and as my readers must also be, of attending to these illiberal attacks upon this venerable victim of intolerance and bigotry, I must tax their patience and my own a little further, while I briefly notice a most extraordinary accusation in note 66, p. 86. "Dr. Priestley," you say, "in the Postscript of his Letter to the Jews, lays himself extremely open to animadversion, where he says; 'on whatever principles you reject the evidences of the Christian miracles, any person will be justified in rejecting those on which the truths of your own religion rests.' In this Jesuitical argument, his adversary professes to detect the Deist—'for if God spake to Moses, why not speak to Jesus? And therefore, if you will not believe that God spake to Jesus, I will not believe that he spake to Moses. Now, therefore, you must either believe both, or I will believe none; for, if you say the religion of Jesus is

false, I say that of Moses is false also. *Ergo*, both are false!" Is it a Christian Divine, and a Dignitary of the Church of England, that has condescended to borrow this miserable trash from a bigoted and ignorant Jew, (for such David Levi unquestionably was,) and to sanction his application of the term 'Jesuitical', to an argument in favour of Christianity, in itself so strong and so judiciously applied, and of the other term 'Deist' also, to as zealous and able an advocate of revelation as our country has ever produced? But Jew or Pagan, orthodox or heretic, appears equally acceptable to you, if he can but furnish you with a weapon of any quality, to hurl at the distinguished object of your animosity. "My chief object," says Dr. Priestley, addressing the Jews, "is to convince you that the *proper*, that is, the *historical evidence* for the miracles of *Christ*, is of the very same kind with that to which you must have recourse, in order to prove the truth of those of *Moses*, and, upon the whole, more strong and satisfactory. If, therefore, it be in your power to persuade a Heathen that God really spake to your ancestors by Moses, by the force of exactly similar arguments, you ought to acknowledge that the same great Being spake by Christ and the apostles; and on whatever principles you reject the evidence of Christian miracles, any person will be justified in rejecting those on which the truth of your own religion rests."* And this is the passage in which "Dr. P. lays himself extremely open to animadversion"! This is the argument which is *Jesuitical*—and betrays *the Deist!* It may be safely left to our readers to determine to which side the reproach of

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* *Letters to the Jews. Works, Vol. xx. p.* 250.

Jesuitism belongs; and if they can believe the Archdeacon of Cleveland to be serious, to form a just estimate of his powers of ratiocination.

Much as I have already exceeded the limits, within which, when I began this Letter, I intended to confine myself, I must not conclude, without noticing your fresh accusations of Mr. Belsham.—"From almost every Unitarian production," you observe, (p. 83,) "I could have selected some perilous assertion, &c. e. g. Mr. Belsham's 'unsound' objection to the 'sabbatical observation of the first day of the week'—'Whatever is lawful or expedient upon any one day of the week is, under the Christian dispensation, equally lawful and expedient on any other day.'" Decidedly adverse as I am, not without the authority of the great apostle of the Gentiles, to own any subjection to that "hand-writing of ordinances" which Jesus "took out of the way, nailing it to his cross," I do not hesitate to acknowledge that I cannot assent to the whole of this proposition of my venerable friend. I am, indeed, fully satisfied that in the sight of God, difference of days makes no difference in the lawfulness of any action; but I cannot help making a broad distinction between lawfulness in the sight of God, and expediency in respect of man. If, therefore, the terms 'expedient' and 'inexpedient', are to be taken in their usual signification, I cannot but regret that Mr. B. has thought it right to use them. At the same time, he might justly claim some little candour and forbearance on this subject from the members of a Church, some of the Supreme Heads of which (and among them the *Blessed Martyr* himself, acting by the advice of an Archbishop of Canterbury) have not only authorized,

but enjoined the use of various profane sports on the Lord's day.

The next "perilous assertion you could select," (p. 84,) is his "portentous Canon of Criticism, propounded in the Preliminary Dissertation to his late Translation of Paul's Epistles, viz. 'That an ambiguous word is to be rendered by a word equally ambiguous!'" To this Canon critics have, I know, objected, and in the translation of profane authors, it may be inadmissible. But in the case of the sacred writings, especially of the Epistles of Paul, I am disposed to think it sound and necessary; of great use in preserving the impartiality of the translator. At all events, this "portentous Canon" is not a novelty; nor is it unsanctioned by the most respectable authority. In a learned and ingenious work which you very properly recommend to the attention of the Clergy, I find the following passage, in which you will hardly detect "the *fœdum inceptu, fœdum exitu.*" "But it may be asked," says Dr. Campbell, "Is there then no case whatever in which it may be pardonable, or even proper, to be, in some degree, obscure? I acknowledge that there are such cases, though they occur but seldom in the historical books. First, it is pardonable to be obscure, or even *ambiguous* when it is necessary for avoiding a greater evil. I consider it as a greater evil in a translator, to assign a meaning merely from conjecture, for which he is conscious he has little or no foundation. In such cases the only unexceptionable method is, to give a literal translation of the words, and acknowledge our ignorance of the meaning. For the same reason, there will be a propriety *in retaining even some ambiguities in the*

*version.* But this method ought to be taken only when the interpreter, using his best judgment, thinks there is ground to doubt which of the two senses, suggested by the words, is the meaning of the author. *If the language of the version be susceptible of the same ambiguity which he finds in the original, it ought to be preserved;* but if the language be not susceptible of it, which often happens, the translator should insert the meaning he prefers in the one, and take notice of the other, in the notes, or on the margin." *(Prelim. Diss.* p. 620, 4to. edit.) Such is the "perilous assertion" of Dr. G. Campbell.—Another portentous canon is this "that when a translator comes to a passage, which must be rendered in a sense favourable or unfavourable to his own system, he will and ought to render it in the favourable sense, &c.!" On this subject let Mr. Belsham himself be heard: "No doubt, all believe their own system to be the true doctrine of the apostles: and when they come to a passage, which must be translated in a sense favourable or unfavourable to their own system, they will, and ought to translate it in the favourable sense, which must necessarily appear to them to be the true sense." And he afterwards very justly and incontrovertibly observes, "In fact, to be destitute of a bias of this kind, is both undesirable and unavoidable: for what must we think of the translation of an author by one who professes that he does not understand his general scope and design? and if he does understand it, how is it possible for him to avoid paying regard to it, in giving the sense of an ambiguous passage? Translators are then only to be censured when, through the bias of system, they are induced to give a turn to the translation which the original does not warrant." When

you, Sir, shall have proved that king James's translators did not form their version on this principle, * or produce any other translation in which the same bias is not perceptible, Mr. Belsham's canon may be deemed a portentous novelty.

In defence of the alteration of the text of *Rom.* ix. 5, I say nothing: I sincerely regret that the venerable translator did not adhere to the rule by which he was guided as Editor of the Improved Version, "that the Received Text is in no case to be altered by critical, or at least, theological conjecture, how ingenious and plausible soever." To your censure of this alteration, you add a remark, (p. 84,) with which I cannot coincide. "Christ, you say, it is true, is elsewhere called *over all, God,* and *blessed;* but that did not suit the translator's sense," &c. It would have been well if you had pointed out the passages in which these terms occur, indisputably applied to Christ. I cannot discover them. I find, indeed, in the English Version of *Rom.* x. 12, the phrase, *over all;* but if Christ be there meant, which is by no means certain, I would beg leave to ask whether *Lord over all* is a perfectly correct rendering of Κυριος παντων? Nor is he in any other place called *blessed,* (ευλογητος) † and, until I have received more convincing evidence than I have yet met with, I cannot allow that he is any where called *God.*

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* Among the rules prescribed to the translators by the king, one is as follow: "When any word hath divers significations, that to be kept which hath been most commonly used by the most eminent Fathers, being agreeable to the propriety of the place, "*and the analogy of faith.*"

† This term occurs but *eight* times in the New Testament; and in every instance, if this be not excepted, it is applied to the God and Father of Jesus Christ.

It is a circumstance not a little creditable to the work of my most highly respected friend, that in pursuing your ungracious task of vituperation, you are reduced to the necessity of adding the following cavilling note, (p. 84.) "See also a transposition recommended *Rom.* x. 16, 17. *against all the authorities!* A fastidious student might *perhaps* detect, in this product of Thirty years' labour! something like sciolism in the Notes on 1 *Cor.* viii. 2 ix. 10. &c. &c." Supposing the transposition unnecessary, it's admission affects no point of doctrine, while it obviates the necessity of interpreting the particle ἄρα in any other than its most usual signification, or of reading, as some have proposed, the 16th verse in a parenthesis; and if it be "*unsupported by authorities,*" as Mr. Belsham acknowledges, it has the sanction of Lenfant, whom I believe you will not presume to stigmatise as a sciolist or a heretic. He who should detect any sciolism in the other passages to which you refer, must be indeed, as you rightly observe, "a *fastidious* student;" but whatever he detects in them, if he look with a little more care than you appear to have thought worth your while, he will ascribe it, not to the translator, but to those from whom he borrowed it, (not without acknowledgment,) to the judicious Lenfant, Bishop Pearce, and your favourite Doddridge.—But the learned and venerable translator requires no further aid from me. His cause is, happily, in his own hands. In better it cannot be placed. The friends of religious truth know too well with what distinguished ability and success, his former contests have been marked, to feel any anxiety for the result of that in which he is about to be engaged with an anonymous

critic, or not to anticipate a decisive and honourable victory.

Here for the present, I conclude: not without regret that I have been so long detained upon so unpleasing a subject. My regret, would indeed, be much diminished could I flatter myself that my humble labours would produce any permanently good effect. But while it is so much easier to bring "a railing accusation," than to answer a weighty argument; while the passions of men are so much more readily excited, than their judgments convinced, Unitarians must expect the frequent renewal of such attacks as those which I have now a second time endeavoured to repel. But whatever may be the result, "Liberavi animam meam:" I have done what I believed to be my duty; and, if I may say it without being charged with intolerable presumption, I think, Sir, I have done something towards making you better acquainted with your's.

I am, Reverend Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

C. WELLBELOVED.

# LETTER II.

Rectius arbitror in tantâ re, ratione quam auctoritate superari.—*Plin.*

That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.—*Paul.*

But of these who seemed to be somewhat, whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person.—*Paul.*

REVEREND SIR,

IT is, I assure you, with great reluctance, that I now enter again upon another topic, which, as I thought, was sufficiently discussed and satisfactorily settled in my former *Letters*: but the manner in which you have introduced it into the Appendix of your last Charge, and the prominent place which you have there assigned to it, compel me to notice it again, and, I fear, at some length. "Had Mr. Wellbeloved," you say, (p. 25,) "even succeeded in bolstering up his sect with the names of Watts, Locke, &c. I should still have said, 'Names are only authorities, not arguments.'" And in this I should most readily and cordially join you. It is, indeed, nothing else than what I have already said. I have declared it to be, in my apprehension, "a matter of comparatively little moment, affecting, in no degree,

the truth of our opinions, whether, in claiming the sanction of these names, we be right or wrong." * But I have certainly reason to complain that you have here, also, not fairly represented the matter which is at issue between us: you have again contrived to make me appear as the assailant, not, which was really the case, as standing on the defensive. It was not "to bolster up a sect," which rests with immoveable firmness on the basis of divine truth, that I endeavoured to establish its claims to a Newton—a Locke—and others "renowned in their generation," but to vindicate it from the charge of craft and disingenuousness, in ranking them amongst its supporters. I should never have thought of appealing to these, or to any other uninspired authorities, had I not felt myself called upon to repel your hasty, illiberal, and unjust accusations, and to shew how little the confidence with which you asserted that these and other distinguished persons were Trinitarians, was warranted by the passages you cited from their works, and the conclusion you drew from them. And I now renew the subject, not because I have in any degree changed my opinion, or have any thing to produce which has not been before brought forwards by others or myself, but solely because you have dwelt upon it so largely, and appear to think that you have chosen ground on which you are unassailable, and of which you cannot be dispossessed.

You disclaim any fondness for "the puerile luxury of having the last word," yet to what but a taste for this

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* *Three Letters, &c.* p. 11.

luxury, can your remarks on the case of Dr. Watts be attributed. You have produced no new evidence of his orthodoxy; you have made no effort to weaken that which I had collected from his own works, to show that he was far from being an orthodox believer in the Trinity long before the time when his sentiments are said to have become "completely Unitarian." * I can account for the re-

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* In a note, indeed, (p. 26,) we are informed that a Mr. Freeston was told by a Dr. Stennett, (both zealous Trinitarians,) that he, sc. Dr. Stennett, had heard Dr. Watts declare (comp. Charge, &c. 1823, p. 27) "That the atonement made by the blood of Christ is the main pillar in Christianity, and the great pillar of his hopes." And then it is tauntingly asked, "Is this an article in the belief of Unitarianism?" To which I answer, If by atonement, be meant *satisfaction*, in the popular sense, it certainly is not; but if by that term, be meant *reconciliation*, according to the declarations of the Christian Scriptures, it is maintained by Unitarians. It is a doctrine on which the views of Unitarians differ; but not more widely, I apprehend, than those of Abp. Magee differ from those of the daily increasing party of 'true churchmen.'

In return for the favour of this note, I beg leave to cite a passage from a very excellent work lately published by a learned and intelligent Trans-atlantic Unitarian. Discussing with great clearness and force this very subject, the orthodoxy of Dr. Watts, the author says, "But we have yet other testimony from Dr. Watts himself. In a letter to the Rev. Dr. Colman, of Boston, written in 1747, he speaks as follows. 'I am glad my book of *Useful Questions* came safe to your hand. I think I have said every thing concerning the Son of God, which Scripture says; *but I could not go so far as to say, with some of our orthodox divines, that the Son is* EQUAL *with the Father*; because our Lord himself expressly says, 'The Father is greater than I.'" Shall we still persist, that Dr. Watts was a Trinitarian, and that, when he said the Father and Son *are not equal*, he meant directly the contrary? If a man who professes a belief in the simple, undivided unity of God; who writes largely, to prove that the Son is a distinct, derived, inferior, subordinate, dependent being; who denies the personality and separate existence of the Holy Spirit, and calls it the power, or influence, or operating agency of God, and affirms that there is no scriptural evidence for worshipping this Spirit; if such a man is to be accounted a Trinitarian, it will be vain to trust any longer to the

appearance of his name only on the ground of your being unwilling to have it supposed that you had been convinced by any arguments of mine; or of your being desirous to put on record, more clearly than before, your contempt for the venerable author of 'The Credibility of the Gospel History.' That the testimony of Lardner, "the cool and judicious Lardner," should be of little or no value, because it is that of a Sectarist, might justify something more than "triple notes of admiration," especially as the authority on which you do rely, in proof that the last sentiments of Watts accorded with those of his early years, is wholly derived from Sectarian writers. I was induced to enter pretty largely into the examination of this question, because you triumphed, prematurely, as it appeared to me, in having put the subject of the orthodoxy of this pious and amiable man "completely at rest:" I flattered myself that I was not unsuccessful in my endeavours to unsettle it; and I am persuaded that every impartial judge will determine that you have, in fact, acknowledged that I have unsettled it, and that you cannot settle it again.

I can assure you, Sir, that I had not "forgotten that Mr. Locke wrote not only the *Reasonableness of Christianity*, but also a *First* and a *Second Vindication* of it against Edwards:" nor had I forgotten that he wrote a *First* and a *Second Reply*, as well as *A Letter*, to the Bishop of Worcester. And no one who wishes to establish the Anti-Trinitarianism of Mr. Locke, (which is

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force of language, or to look for meaning in words, or distinction in things."—*Inquiry into the Comparative Moral Tendency of Trin. and Unit. Doctrines, &c. by Jared Sparks*, p. 383.

all I aim at,) will desire that these writings of his should be either forgotten or unnoticed. For I consider it impossible for any one to read these Replies with attention, noticing their general spirit and tendency, and not satisfying himself with culling from one page and another, half sentences containing something like orthodox terms, or orthodox sentiments, and not clearly to perceive that neither the doctrine of the Trinity, at least as commonly maintained, nor any of the doctrines which it is the fashion to call the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, were held by this "illustrious metaphysician." The whole tenor, even of his *Vindications* and *Replies*, is anti-trinitarian, and anti-calvinistical.

I acknowledge, that in what relates to Locke's orthodoxy, we do lay much stress upon "the Canon of Suppression;" not because it is convenient, but because it is most directly applicable to the case. For it seems to us scarcely possible, certainly in the highest degree improbable, that any one should write a paraphrase and copious notes on five of Paul's Epistles, (one of them the Epistle to the Romans, which, if I recollect rightly, you once recommended to be selected and translated into the modern languages of the East, as being peculiarly adapted to teach the Heathen the truths of Christianity,) and yet afford no indisputable evidence that he received the doctrine of the Trinity. Can you point out any other commentator on these parts of Scripture, concerning whose opinions on this head, any doubt exists? It is still more astonishing, if possible, that the same silence respecting this doctrine should be observed, in his *Reasonableness of Christianity*, a work expressly designed to shew what men are

required by the Scriptures to believe, in order to be entitled to the name and privileges of Christians. The doctrines of the Deity of Christ, his meritorious sufferings and atonement, are now held to be essential doctrines of the Gospel; no one is allowed to call himself a Christian unless he receives them: and yet these are unnoticed by Mr. Locke, at the very time in which he is engaged in settling the fundamental articles of the Christian faith! No wonder that this omission, among others, gave occasion to the furious bigot Edwards to pronounce him "all over Socinianized"; and yet in his two laboured Vindications of himself, as well as in his Letters and two Replies to the Bp. of Worcester, who had detected in his Essay on the Human Understanding, principles subversive, as he thought, of the doctrine of the Trinity, "suppression" still prevails. From all his works, no one passage can be cited which directly and unequivocally asserts his faith in that doctrine. You have endeavoured to infer it from several passages; but, as I hope to prove, in a manner most illogical and unsatisfactory. But could such have possibly been the case had Mr. Locke been an orthodox believer? Half a dozen words, in his *First Vindication* against Edwards, and in his *First Reply* to the Bishop of Worcester, would have settled the main point at issue, and fixed him for ever in the ranks of orthodoxy. Account for this silence, Sir, if you can. I maintain, that on the ground of his being sound as to this article of faith, it is altogether inexplicable.

You say, indeed, (p. 27,) that "in his *Second Vindication*, (§ 14,) he has fully rebutted the allegation that '*one cannot pass by any thing without contempt of*

it.'" But let any one read that section, and he will be satisfied that this proposition is nothing at all to the purpose for which you have cited it. In rebutting this allegation, he has very satisfactorily proved that his passing by the Epistles did not imply, as Edwards had alleged, his contempt of them, because they did not come properly within his notice. They were addressed to *believers*; and it was his design, in writing the *Reasonableness of Christianity* to collect only what our Saviour and his apostles had said and preached to *unbelievers*. "I perused," says he, "the preachings of our Saviour and his apostles to the unconverted world, to see what they taught and required to be believed, to make men Christians: and all these I set down, and leave the world to judge what they contained. The Epistles, which were all written to those who had embraced the faith, and were all Christians already, I thought, would not so distinctly shew what were those doctrines which were absolutely necessary to make men Christians; they being not writ to convert unbelievers, but to build up those who were already believers, in their most holy faith."* But this cannot account for his silence respecting the doctrine of the Trinity. If that doctrine had been discovered by him in the Gospels and the Acts, he must, according to his declared purpose, have included it among those required by our Saviour and his apostles, to be believed; unless we are to suppose, that finding it there, he passed it by as a doctrine not necessary to make men Christians. But is this consistent with his being a believer in that doctrine? Will you or any other Trinitarian assent to the proposition,

* *Works, vol. ii. p. 637, fol. edit.* 1740.

that the doctrine of the Trinity is not taught in the discourses of Christ and his apostles; or not a fundamental article of faith? This, then, like most of your other citations, when properly examined, is found to be adverse rather than favourable to your cause.

But you are unwilling to allow any force to this argument, grounded on the absence of all express declarations of his faith in the doctrine of the Trinity. "On this subject you say, (p. 28,) let us hear his own reply to a similar crimination. 'If the omissions, which Mr. Edwards so much blames in my book, make me a Socinian, I see not how the Church of England will escape that censure: since those omissions are in that very Confession of Faith (the Apostle's Creed) which she proposes, and upon a profession whereof she baptizes those whom she designs to make Christians.'" He had made a similar observation in his *First Vindication.** But did this satisfy Mr. Edwards? No one can be surprised that it did not. "We are not to think," says he, "that the Apostle's Creed expressly contains in it all the necessary and weighty points, all the important doctrines of our Belief, it being only designed to be an *Abstract*. It is with this Creed as 'tis with the Commandments and the Lord's Prayer. If a man *doth* not more than is expressly enjoined in the *Decalogue*, he can't be said to *act* as a Christian. If he prays for no more than is expressly mentioned in the petitions of the foresaid *prayer*, he can't be said to *pray* as a good Christian. So if a man *believe* no more than is in *express* terms in the *Apostle's Creed*, his faith will not be

* *Works, vol. ii. p.* 392.

the *faith* of a Christian." * . As, in the opinion of Mr. Edwards, Christian and Trinitarian are synonymous terms; he was justified in this assertion; and as you, Sir, regard those terms in the same light, you must admit the truth of his assertion. The Apostle's Creed is by no means inconsistent with Anti-Trinitarianism. There is nothing essentially Trinitarian in it. It speaks of the Father only as God; and when it declares of Christ that he was born of the Virgin Mary, it propounds nothing more than has been believed by many Unitarians in all ages of the Church. Mr. Edwards, indeed, maintains that according to the Comment on this Creed in the Church Catechism, it comprehends more than the words expressly declare; and whoever will closely consider what Mr. Locke has urged in Reply, † while he cannot fail to admire his ingenuity and acuteness, he will feel fully satisfied that he was unwilling to admit the Trinitarian ‡ explanation of this ancient symbol of faith.

If any thing in the way of argument from the Archdeacon of Cleveland could astonish me, it would be the sentence which follows next in order. (p. 29.) "That he, (Mr. Locke,) did not detect the fundamentals of

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* *Socinianism Unmasked*, p. 47.

† *Works, vol. ii. p. 647—651.*

‡ "The Apostle's Creed," he observes in his *First Vindication*, (*Works*, vol. ii. p. 593,) was taken, in the first ages of the Church, to contain all things necessary to salvation; I mean necessary to be believed: but you," (Edwards,) "have now better thought on it, and are pleased to enlarge it, and we, no doubt, are bound to submit to your orthodoxy." What were these enlargements, but such comments as those of the Church Catechism, cited by Edwards, and those afterwards given by Pearson and others: intended to make it speak the

Christianity in the Epistles, for which he elsewhere declares he has "as high a veneration as any one can have," was because he (rightly, or wrongly) considered them as written 'not to convert believers, but to build up those who had already believed in their most 'holy faith,' and therefore, 'not likely so distinctly to shew the *Doctrines absolutely necessary to make men Christians*': and to what doctrines can he refer, except those which he had been abused for not having discovered in them, the Anti-Socinian doctrines of the English Church?" Is it possible that such a question as this can be put by any one who has perused the *Reasonableness of Christianity*, and its two *Vindications?* Has Mr. Locke left it a matter of doubt, what he understood by the *doctrines absolutely necessary to make men Christians?* Is it not the object of the former of these works to shew that all the faith required, as necessary to justification, is, "the belief of Jesus of Nazareth to be the Messiah, together with these concomitant articles of his resurrection, rule, and coming again to judge the world;" * and of the latter to vindicate this position from the objections that had been urged against it? And is it not this faith and these concomitant articles to which he refers as the fundamental doctrines which the Epistles, written to believers, were not likely so distinctly to shew?—the very doctrines, for the laying down of which, as alone *absolutely necessary to make men Christians* Mr. Edwards reproached him with being all over Socinianized? How then can he refer to

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language of Trinitarianism; but evidently in contradiction to Mr. Locke's view of it? See also pp. 648, 649.

* *Works, vol. ii. p.* 381.

the Anti-Socinian doctrines of the English Church? 'Aliquando bonus dormitat Homerus.' Surely, Sir, you must have been nodding over Locke's Folios when you wrote this sentence. If, after the preceding inquiries, any doubt can remain, as to what Mr. Locke actually discovered in the Epistles, let me refer you to his 'Paraphrase and Notes'; and by a perusal of these, you must be fully satisfied that he never detected in them any Anti-Socinian, or rather I should say, any Anti-Unitarian doctrines.

"In another place," (you observe, p. 30,) "he asks, 'What if I should say, I set down as much as my argument required, and *yet am no Socinian?*'" On which I would only observe, that I contend, not that Mr. Locke was a Socinian, but that he was an Anti-Trinitarian. Those characters may be perfectly distinct. I am as unwilling as Mr. Locke could be, to own myself a Socinian. In repelling, and no doubt, with reason, the charge of Socinianism, he does not clear himself of that of being an unbeliever in the doctrine of the Trinity. You add, "And I ask: what if he has said; 'He, that hath incurred death for his own transgression, cannot *lay down his life for another*, as our Saviour professeth he did.'" And I reply, what indeed if he has said this? This will not warrant you to claim him as a Trinitarian. Whether, as you inquire, and then determine for yourself in the negative, "a Socinian would have thus expressed himself?" not being a Socinian myself, I will not take upon me to assert; but I have no hesitation in asserting that it is a manner of expressing himself to which no Unitarian will object. Since an Apostle has assured us that "he who did no sin was made sin for

us:" and our blessed Lord himself has declared that "he is the good Shepherd, and that he layeth down his life for the sheep;" we are not only ready to use the same language, but we firmly believe, and gratefully rejoice in the doctrine it conveys: and moreover, in obedience to the precepts of the beloved disciple, we hold it to be our duty, because He laid down his life for us, if required, "*to lay down our lives for the brethren.*" Again, you say, (p. 31,) "He elsewhere affirms that 'pardon, and forgiveness of sins, and salvation by Him was the great end of his coming?'"* "Again he states; 'The Doctrine of Redemption, and consequently of the Gospel, is founded upon the supposition of Adam's fall:' and elsewhere, 'Satisfaction may plainly be collected out of several places in my *Reasonableness of Christianity*, some whereof which I took out of the Gospels I mentioned in my *Vindication*, and others of them which I took out of the Epistles.—As I say, the design of our Saviour's coming was, to be offered up; and again I speak of the Work of our Redemption, words which in the Epistles are taken to imply Satisfaction.'" Now had you multiplied such quotations as these tenfold, it could not have answered your purpose, unless that purpose had been to dazzle the eyes of your readers, and to mislead their judgment. It is very true that Mr. Locke uses the term *redemption*, and says that *satisfaction* may be implied from Christ's laying down his life for us: but I challenge you to produce one passage from all his works, in which it is evident that he used these or simi-

* For this quotation, as it appears to be, we are referred to his *Reasonableness of Christianity*. I wish the reference had been more particular: I cannot find such a passage in that work.

lar terms in any thing like the popular and orthodox sense. His adversary was not satisfied with this defence; and no wonder. Besides, sentences thus taken out of their connexion, and given by halves, cannot possibly convey a correct view of the opinions of any writer: I could easily fill several pages with fragments of a directly opposite tendency. Nay, I should not despair of proving by such a method, Bp. Bull himself an Arian, and Horsley and Magee unbelievers in the 'peculiar doctrines of the Gospel.' The only way of ascertaining Mr. Locke's sentiments, is to take a fair and comprehensive view of his system, and as it appears desirable, once for all, if possible, to settle the question of his orthodoxy, I will endeavour to exhibit such a view to my readers; keeping as closely as I can to his own words.

According to Mr. Locke then, as we learn both from various passages in his work on the Epistles, and particularly from his *Reasonableness of Christianity*; 'Adam being the Son of God, was immortal; but falling from a state of perfect obedience, by this fall lost bliss and immortality: and he having become mortal, all who sprung from him were mortal like their progenitor; and thus would have remained under death for ever, i. e. on dying, would not have revived, but have been for ever lost, had not God, out of his infinite mercy, willing to bestow eternal life on mortal men, sent Jesus Christ into the world; who being conceived in the womb of a virgin, was not a son of Adam; but like Adam, was was the Son of God, and, in the image of his Father, immortal, as Adam, also, had been before his trans-

gression. Being not only immortal, but doing no sin, and consequently, incurring not death for any transgression, he had power from the Father to lay down his life for others, and to take it again. In reward for this act of obedience, he restores all mankind to life, and that life which he restores to all men, is that which they receive again at the resurrection. In consequence of Adam's fall, all men became mortal, and once dying, would have died for ever. In consequence of Christ's obedience to death, all men will be restored to life again, after death, at the last day. And so they none of them lose any thing which, by their own righteousness, they might have a title to: for righteousness, or an exact obedience to the law, seems to have a claim of right to eternal life. But it is the unalterable purpose of the divine justice that no unrighteous person, no one that is guilty of any breach of the law, should be in paradise, or be immortal; and as all have sinned, and as all must sin, and whoever is guilty must certainly die and cease to be, the benefit of life, restored by Christ at the resurrection, would have been no great advantage, for as much as, here again, death must have seized upon all mankind, if God had not found out a way to justify some; proposing to the children of men, that as many of them as would believe Jesus his Son to be the Messiah, the promised Deliverer, and would receive him for their King and Ruler, should have all their past sins, disobedience, and rebellion forgiven them: and if for the future, they lived in a sincere obedience to his law, to the utmost of their power, the sins of human frailty, for the time to come, as well as all those of their past lives, should for his Son's sake, who was his be-

loved, and so was chiefly regarded in all this, * because they gave themselves up to him as their king, be forgiven them; and so their faith, which made them be baptized into his name, (i. e. enrol themselves in the kingdom of Jesus the Messiah, and profess themselves his subjects, and consequently, live by the laws of his kingdom,) should be accounted to them for righteousness, i. e. should supply the defects of a scanty obedience in the sight of God; who, counting this faith to them for righteousness or complete obedience, did thus justify, or make them just, and thereby capable of eternal life."

Such is the system adopted by Mr. Locke, to explain and support which, he wrote *The Reasonableness of Christianity*, and in the illustration of which, many of his notes on the Epistles are employed; and you will indeed well earn the title, which you give in scorn to others, of a "Lyncean Divine," if you can discover in it any of what you call the *mysteries of salvation*, or what are so generally and loudly proclaimed to be the peculiar doctrines of the Reformation and of the Gospel. Mr. Locke, indeed, sets out with utterly disclaiming that which is now regarded as the foundation of all sound and saving theology; the total corruption of the human heart in consequence of Adam's fall. "By death here," (Gen. ii. 17,) says he, "I must confess, I under-

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* See Eph. i. 6, note on. This phrase *for Christ's sake*, is never used by Mr. Locke in the common and orthodox sense. He represents, elsewhere, the revival of mankind at the resurrection, as being for Christ's sake—"*that the kingdom in heaven, which he had received as a reward of his sufferings and death, might not be without subjects.*"

stand nothing but a ceasing to be, the losing of all actions of life and sense. If by death threatened to Adam, were meant the corruption of human nature in his posterity, 'tis strange *the New Testament should not any where take notice of it*, and tell us, that corruption seized on all, because of Adam's transgression, as well as it tells us so of death. But, as I remember, every one's sin is charged upon himself only." Nor is his view of the doctrine of Redemption in any degree consonant with that which is reputed orthodox. * "It is obvious," he says in the first sentence of *The Reasonableness, &c.* "to any one who reads the New Testament, that the doctrine of Redemption, and consequently of the Gospel, is founded upon the supposition of Adam's fall. To understand, therefore, what we are restored to by Jesus Christ, we must consider what the Scripture shews we lost by Adam." That, he maintains, was immortality: the redemption, therefore, is the restoration of immortality at the resurrection. And at the conclusion of the same work, replying to what he thinks might possibly be asked, viz.—"What need was there of a Saviour? What advantage have we by Christ?" he adds to that chief advantage of restoring mankind to immortality, which is the great subject of the treatise, no other than 1. The imparting to mankind the knowledge of one God—2. A clear knowledge of

* Let any one read Mr. Locke's notes on *Rom.* iii. 25; *Eph.* i. 7, ii. 8, 15, and all others of the same kind, and he will be fully satisfied that he affixes to the terms *redemption, propitiation, satisfaction, salvation, &c.* nothing like the ideas, which in orthodox systems they universally bear. His explanations of all the leading texts on the side of Trinitarianism, and other points connected with it, are strictly Unitarian. Could this have been the case had he been a Trinitarian?

their duty—3. A reformation of the outward forms of worshipping a Deity—4. Encouragement to a virtuous and pious life—5. The promise of assistance. In no part of his works do any of those views of the design and efficacy of the death of Christ, which so generally prevail, appear. He, who in the Apostle's Creed is confessed as the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, is spoken of by Mr. L. as "the one, invisible, eternal, omnipotent God." Of the deity of Christ he no where says one word. He speaks of him as the Son of God, not by any eternal generation, but by his miraculous birth; and as to that more pure and spiritual part, which by divine extraction he had immediately from God; the most eminent and characteristical mark of his being the Son of God, being his resurrection from the dead.* If in any place he speaks of "the Son of

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* *Works, Vol. ii. p. 558. Rom. i. 3—5.*

Elsewhere (*Works, ii. p. 559*) he says, "God has now a Son again in the world," (Adam having been his Son formerly) "the first-born of many brethren, who all now by the Spirit of adoption, can say, Abba, Father. And we, by adoption, being for his sake made his brethren, and the sons of God, come to share in that inheritance which was his natural right; *he being by birth the Son of God;* which inheritance is eternal life."

It is deserving of remark, that Mr. Locke's sentiments concerning the Sonship of Christ, are precisely the same with those of the old Unitarians. To the question in the Racovian Catechism, "Was, then, the Lord Jesus a mere or common man?" It is replied, "By no means: because, first, though by nature he was a man, he was nevertheless, at the same time, and even from his earliest origin, the only begotten Son of God. For being conceived of the Holy Spirit, and born of a virgin, without the intervention of any human being, he had properly no father besides God. Secondly, because, as Christ testifies of himself, he was sanctified and sent into the world by the Father, &c. Thirdly, because, as the apostle Paul testifies, he was raised from the dead by God, and thus, as it were, begotten a second time," &c.—* *Racovian Catechism, translated by Dr. T. Rees, p. 52.*

God while clothed in the flesh," which, as you assert it, must no doubt be the fact, it affords no proof of his having been a believer in the doctrine of the Incarnation. He may have used such a phrase in perfect consistency with his more plainly declared opinions respecting his nature. Job says of himself that God had 'clothed him with flesh.' (Ch. x. 11.)

I acknowledge, with all gratitude, your kindness in assisting my recollection respecting the term 'mystery,' and only regret that you should offer any thing like an apology for so doing; since, like yourself, "I trust I shall always, with President Edwards, feel grateful for instruction, even from a child or an enemy." (Charge, 1823, p. 24.) Yet though my recollection is refreshed, my judgment is not altered. I am still confident that when Mr. Locke speaks of the *mysteries of salvation*, he has no reference to doctrines in themselves incomprehensible, but only to those purposes of God which had been kept secret, but were at length by the appearance of the Messiah, and the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles, fully made known. Nor is there any thing in the passage you have cited, at all inconsistent with the creed of a Unitarian. "The Holy Scripture," he says, "is to me, and always will be, the constant guide of my assent; and I shall always hearken to it, as containing infallible truth, relating to things of highest concernment. And I wish I could say there were no mysteries in it: I acknowledge there are to me, and I fear always will be." If Mr. Locke refer not here to those passages in the Scriptures which contain nothing in themselves incomprehensible, but are perplexed and obscure, in consequence, partly, of their

original construction, and partly of the various circumstances belonging to works of so peculiar a character, and so remote an age, he may speak not merely of the *word of God*, but of the *subject of revelation*, in which case he says nothing which has not been more strongly said by one of your 'Lyncean Divines,' who are so peculiarly jealous of the word 'mystery.' (p. 33.)—I cannot "humbly presume to assist your recollection," because the passage to which I allude is to be found in the Sermons of a "Sectarian Disquisitor;" but I may, perhaps, by quoting it, correct some little misconception respecting the opinions of "his school."—"As in nature," says Mr. Cappe, "and in providence, so also in revelation, there are deep things and unsearchable; secrets too profound for human sagacity to penetrate, mysteries too intricate, for the present, to be unravelled by the human mind. If in nature there is what you cannot fathom, if in providence there is what perplexes you, can you expect that in revelation there should be nothing but what you can completely comprehend, and perfectly explain? They have the same great author, God; and address themselves to the same diminutive observer, man. If the things that are seen, and present with us, are in so many instances lost in clouds and darkness, can it be supposed that things unseen and things to come, should, in every instance, be conceived by us more clearly, and comprehended more completely? It does not follow that because they are revealed, they are therefore perfectly explained; it does not follow because God is the revealer, that therefore man, to whom they are revealed, should comprehend them as perfectly as he." *

* *Cappe's Discourses on Practical Subjects, p.* 279.

But Mr. Locke, we are told, (p. 31,) in his *First Reply* to the Bishop of Worcester, speaks of the doctrine of the Trinity as 'an Article of the Christian Faith.' It is true, he does use these words; but whoever will turn to the passage, (*Works, Vol. i. p.* 431,) for it is too long to be transcribed, and will mark the very cautious and skilful manner in which it is constructed, will be far from being convinced that Mr. Locke held the doctrine, at least in any thing like the way in which it is commonly maintained. The Bishop, we know was not convinced by it; but in his Answer, told him that 'he should have cleared himself by declaring to the world, that he owned the doctrine of the Trinity, as it has been received in the Christian Church.' To which Mr. Locke replied * 'In what you require of me here, you possibly have cut out too much work, for a poor ordinary lay-man, for whom it is too hard to know how a doctrine, so disputed, has been received in the Christian Church, and who might have thought it enough to own it, as delivered in the Scriptures...I presume your Lordship, in your discourse in vindication of the doctrine of the Trinity, intends to give it us, as it has been received in the Christian Church...But if I am to own it, as your lordship has there delivered it, I must own what I do not understand; for, I confess your exposition of the sense of the church, wholly transcends my capacity." And is it not universally allowed, that every exposition of that doctrine transcends the capacity of every one; and is it not expected of every believer in it that he own it with implicit faith? Is not this a a virtual declaration on the part of Mr. Locke, that he

* *Works, Vol. i. p.* 455.

could not receive that doctrine? But you observe (p. 31) "that the honest essayist declares, 'he thinks it enough to own it, as delivered in the Scriptures.'" True, and without being a Trinitarian. H. Taylor, an Arian, held "the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, as revealed in the New Testament."* The late Dr. Le Courayer was no Trinitarian, yet he could speak of a Scripture-Trinity. "I believe," says he "that there is but one God; and that his Spirit is not a substance distinct from him; and that Jesus Christ, to whom the Deity was most intimately united, is his Son by virtue of that union. This is all the Trinity that I find in the Gospel. And I have no conception that any other kind of Trinity can accord with the unity of God. —The *Incarnation* moreover, has nothing in it contrary to the doctrine of the Unity of God, any more than the *Trinity*. Accordingly, it is extremely remarkable, that neither Jesus Christ, nor his apostles, have ever represented *these mysteries* to us, as containing any thing incomprehensible, or not to be reconciled to reason."† Thus, Sir, you see that something of the language of orthodoxy, may be held by those who cannot be reckoned among orthodox believers. If Mr. Locke did indeed own the doctrine of the Trinity, as delivered in the Scriptures, it was what he could understand; and consequently very different from that of the Athanasian Creed.—But once more; for I am desirous of leaving nothing unnoticed, to which you have referred, and on which you lay so much stress: "Mr. Locke adds," you observe, (p. 31,)

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* *Apology of Ben Mord. Vol. i. p.* 148.

† *Lindsey's Vindiciæ Priestleianæ, p.* 186.

"'I say with Mr. Chillingworth, that I do heartily acknowledge and believe the Articles of our Faith to be in themselves truth, as certain and infallible as the very common principles of Geometry and Metaphysics.' and further, 'I agree with you, that there is but one only true religion: I agree, too, that that one only true religion is professed and held in the Church of England." I hope you do not mean it to be understood that either Locke or Chillingworth referred to the Thirty-nine Articles: if you do, you misrepresent them: Chillingworth certainly, and Locke, I am fully persuaded, had in mind the Articles of the Apostle's Creed; which, as I have before said, are perfectly consistent with Anti-Trinitarianism. And when Mr. Locke says that there is but one only true religion, and that that is professed in the Church of England, does he mean that the whole system of doctrine and worship, adopted by the Church of England, is the only true religion? By no means: as any one will perceive, who will not be content with a mangled sentence, but read the whole chapter (the seventh) of the *Third Letter on Toleration*, in which the words occur. "I grant," says he, "that there is but one true religion in the world, which is that whose doctrine and worship are necessary to salvation. I grant, too, that the true religion necessary to salvation, is taught and professed in the Church of England: and yet, it will not follow from hence, that the religion of the Church of England, as established by law, is the only true religion, if there be any thing established in the Church of England by law, and made part of its religion, which is not necessary to salvation, and which any other church, teaching and professing all that is necessary to

salvation, does not receive."* He further observes, that his adversary cannot say "that the national religion of England is the only true religion, though it contain the only true religion in it; as possibly most, if not all the differing Christian Churches, now in the world, do." And at the conclusion of this chapter, addressing his adversary, he says, "You, therefore, who are so apt without cause to complain of want of ingenuity in others, will do well hereafter to consult your own, and, another time, change your style; and not under *the undefined name of the true religion, because that is of more advantage to your argument,* mean only the religion established by law in England, shutting out all other religions now in the world." Is this the language of one who received all the doctrines of the established Church, as the doctrines of the Gospel? It is evident from his Replies to Edwards, that by 'the religion, the true religion taught and professed in the Church of England,' he means "that confession of faith," *(viz. the Apostle's Creed,)* "which she proposes, and upon a profession whereof, she baptizes those whom she designs to make Christians." But this faith, as I have before remarked, is not Trinitarian. It may be professed by a strict Unitarian.† This Creed

* *Works, Vol. ii. p. 408.*

† In the first Edition of '*The Book of Common Prayer reformed, &c.*' by Mr. Lindsey, the Apostle's Creed was retained, with the omission only of the following clauses: "He descended into hell,"—"The holy Catholic Church," and "The Communion of Saints." In subsequent editions, it was omitted solely, because it was not written by the Apostles; because it was deemed wrong to put persons upon making a declaration of their faith in assemblies for Christian worship; because no one ought to dictate to others what they are to believe; and because the imposition of Creeds has been the cause of many evils. See *Lindsey's Sermon on Prayer, &c. p. 25.*

being the only confession required of those who come to be baptized and admitted members of the Church in adult age, Mr. Locke, on this ground, maintained that the Church of England professed and taught the true religion. Neither the Athanasian Creed, nor the Nicene Creed, nor the Thirty-nine Articles being proposed to the convert on that occasion, he thought himself at liberty entirely to overlook them; and they never appear to enter into his definition of the only true religion.

You may affect to treat all that I have advanced as "glosseries and quackeries and repetitions of antiquated sophistries:"* Prove them to be so, and I will be

* In the passage from which these words are taken, (pp. 33, 34,) there is an insinuation which I cannot suffer to pass wholly without notice, but of which I will not speak in the terms which alone are suitable to it. "The Socinians and Arians, says Biddle, 'esteem of one another as Christians and true believers'—though" adds the Archdeacon, "the former deny, and the latter affirm, the pre-existence of the Saviour! &c. But Pilate and Herod, it has been frequently remarked, *were made friends together* in order to crucify Christ. Thus we find the followers of Socinus quoting Price and Benson and Chandler, &c. &c. with great complacency." And why not, when all are equally believers in the 'One only true and living God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ;' in whatever terms they may speak of Him whom the Father, the great and only Potentate, sent into the world? They are, to say the least, as nearly allied as the Souths, and the Sherlocks, and the Waterlands and the Wallises: to all of whom, as to truly orthodox believers, the Archdeacon gives the right-hand of fellowship. And cannot they who even hold the perfect humanity of Christ, and they who suppose him to have been a pre-existent spirit, be friends together as believers in the unrivalled supremacy of the Father, without being accused of the base design of denying and degrading Him, whose disciples they call themselves, and whom they profess to love and honour? Why should they who firmly believe in the divine mission of Jesus, who rejoice in his doctrine, and revere his precepts, be likened to those who despised and insulted him, and unjustly condemned him to death, for no other reason than that after the most diligent examination of

content that the name of Locke should be enrolled among "your Pearsons and your Beveridges, your Leslies, your Hookers, and your Waterlands." (pp. 15, 16.) But every attempt of this kind, you must surely perceive, will be vain. Agreeably to your wishes, I have 'spun no cobweb theories about the Socinianism of Mr. Locke,' but I have thrown around you the strong toils of demonstration as to his Anti-Trinitarianism, and struggle as you will, I am confident you will not be able to escape.

In my former Letters I brought evidence which appears to me sufficient to convince any one, not predetermined to resist conviction, that Unitarians claim the illustrious Author of the *Principia*, upon better ground than "The Canon of Suppression." Yet if it were not so, I should deny that "this convenient Canon will authorize us to draw at least as plausible an inference the opposite way."—"To a person of Newton's integrity," you say, (p. 27,) "it would surely appear far more a matter of duty to assail an established idolatry, if he had believed it to be such, than to volunteer the defence of an established truth. His silence, therefore," you conclude, "would be proportionally more natural in the latter case than in the former." But may not his silence in the former case be perfectly well accounted for? May not a man of great integrity be

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the Scriptures of truth, they think themselves unwarranted to receive and adore him as the supreme and everlasting God? The character and feeling of upright and conscientious men ought not to be thus sported with, for the purpose, as it should seem, of either gracing a period, or of gratifying an intolerant and censorious spirit.

unwilling to become, in any sense, a martyr—to expose himself to the scoffs and insults, the reproach and infamy, with which imputed heresy is visited? Did he not see enough of the spirit and conduct of the zealots of his day, in their treatment of Clarke and Whiston, to make one of his "most fearful and cautious temper," very careful not to put himself in their power?* I need not multiply these questions. Your knowledge of human nature, and your experience of the world, will enable you to reconcile Sir I. Newton's integrity with his abstaining from an open attack on opinions which he may secretly have condemned as unscriptural and even idolatrous.

You proceed to another trial of this "convenient Canon of Suppression;" and the result is, if possible, still less successful. In the 14th ch. of his *Observations on the Prophecies of Daniel*, Sir Isaac Newton tells us that Athanasius hid the bones of the Baptist from the persecution of the Emperor Julian—refers to these miracle-working bones more than once, and adds, that Athanasius, even from his youth, looked upon the dead Saints and Martyrs as mediators of our prayers. "Here then," you observe, "would have been the place for him to introduce, not unaptly, a censure on the doctrine of the celebrated Creed, had he judged it an inno-

* See *Whiston's Memoirs, p.* 292. See also *Bp. Hare's Difficulties and Discouragements in the Study of the Scriptures.* It appears from this admirable Tract, that heretics had no more favour shewn them in those days than they have now. "If you do not continue orthodox," says the Bishop, "every thing you say or do, will have a wrong turn given to it. A slip of memory shall be made wilful prevarication: a mistake in a citation shall be forgery and corruption: an error in an incidental point of learning shall be a good proof that you know nothing," &c. &c.

vation upon that of the Christian Church. How are we to interpret the omission?" The answering of such an inquiry is almost as great an insult to the understanding of my readers, as the proposing of the inquiry itself. Plainly, because in a chapter written expressly to illustrate the prophecy of Daniel relating to "Mahuzzim," by tracing the origin and progress of the worship of Saints and Martyrs, the mention of the Athanasian Creed would have been *most unapt*; and Sir I. Newton was not so loose and incoherent a writer, as to introduce subjects altogether foreign from his argument. Besides, if it was his design in that chapter insidiously to attack the Athanasians, (as it is supposed by some,) he would scarcely have thought of openly attacking their Creed: especially as he could not charge upon Athanasius himself a Creed, which he knew was composed above a century after his death.

You proceed thus; "Again, when in his Observations upon the Apocalypse of St. John, he speaks of the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world, or as he calls him, (in p. 322,) the Lord of Lords, and King of Kings, &c. and quotes the acclamation of Blessing, honour, glory, and power, unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever, as part of the worship of the 'primitive Christians,' since he does not interpose any caution on the subject, is it not reasonable to conclude, that he felt such caution to be unnecessary?" Pray, Sir, is it indeed Sir I. Newton that interposes no caution, or is it the Archdeacon of Cleveland, who has here adopted the "Convenient Canon of Suppression," and omitted the caution actually interposed by Sir Isaac? To me, at least, it ap-

pears that sufficient caution is to be found in a passage which, for some reason or other, you have not chosen to transcribe. Having cited *Apoc. ch. v.* 6—10, Sir I. Newton adds this comment: "The Beasts and Elders, therefore, represent the primitive *Christians* of all nations; and the worship of these *Christians* in their churches is here represented under the form of worshipping God and the Lamb in the temple: God for his benefaction in creating all things, and the Lamb for his benefaction in redeeming us with his blood: God as sitting upon the throne and *living for ever*, and the Lamb as *exalted above all by the merits of his death*." He then recites the acclamation which you have quoted. Undoubtedly this comment was inserted in the passage you have imperfectly transcribed, to shew that the worship which the primitive Christians offered to Christ, was a subordinate worship; and, therefore, it ought not to have been omitted. "How shall we account for this omission?" Some of my readers, may perhaps, answer by a pretty "comprehensively significant shake of the head." Let any one with this comment in his mind, read the Treatise of Mr. Emlyn, (the friend of Sir Isaac Newton,) intitled *A Vindication of the Worship of the Lord Jesus Christ on Unitarian Principles*, in which this very passage from the Apocalypse is cited, and he will not find in this, or in any other passage of the *Observations on the Apocalypse*, the slightest ground for disputing the Anti-Trinitarianism of the illustrious author. It is not a little remarkable, and I think you ought not to have suppressed the fact, that the Editor of Sir Isaac Newton's *Observations, &c.* has printed at the end of the volume, another copy of the last pages of the work "differently drawn up by the Author," and from

which the whole passage to which you have referred, is omitted. I mean not, however, to ground any inference on this, as perhaps it is impossible to ascertain which of the two copies received the last sanction of the author.

Once more: "When then," you observe, "in addition to these considerations, we learn that Newton is said to have closeted some of the Members of the Royal Society, in order to get clear of the Arian Whiston as a 'Heretic' who had recently addressed his *Letter to Finch Earl of Winchelsea*" (Nottingham) "*on the Eternity of the Son of God and his Holy Spirit*, we shall hardly be disposed to brand him as a Socinian." As hardly will any reasonable person be disposed to grant that he was a Trinitarian. And I should be very glad to know where, but in your Appendix, "we learn that Newton wished to get clear of the Arian Whiston, as a 'Heretic?'" We certainly do not learn it from Whiston himself. He tells us, indeed, that upon being accidentally asked by Dr. Halley, 'Why he was not a Member of the Royal Society?' he answered, 'Because they durst not choose an Heretic.' "Upon which," he adds, "Dr. Halley said to Sir Hans Sloane, that if he would propose me, he would second it: which was done accordingly. When Sir I. Newton heard this, he was greatly concerned; and, by what I then learned, closeted some of the members in order to get clear of me; and told them, that if I was chosen a member, he would not be president."—"Now," says Whiston further, "if the reader desire to know the reason of Sir I. Newton's unwillingness to have me a member, he must take notice, that as his making me first his deputy, and

giving me the full profit of the place, brought me to be a candidate, as his recommendation of me to the Heads of Colleges in Cambridge made me his successor; so did I enjoy a large portion of his favour for twenty years together. But he then perceiving that I could not do as his other darling friends did, that is, learn of him, without contradicting him, when I differed in opinion from him, he could not, in his old age, bear such contradiction; and so he was afraid of me the last thirteen years of his life. He was of the most fearful, cautious, and suspicious temper, that I ever knew." * Whether Whiston's judgment of Sir Isaac's temper be correct or not, no one can read his very interesting, and evidently faithful, Memoirs of himself, without easily entering into the motives by which the venerable President may have been induced to oppose his becoming a member. That his heresy, or his Letter to the Earl of Nottingham, (not of Winchelsea) had no share in these motives, we may be confident; for Whiston, who had surmised that he would be rejected on that ground, was not a man to conceal the fact, if such had been the cause of his rejection.

As to your remark, that his rejection of 1 John, v. 7, is, in the words of Porson, "virtually a defence of orthodoxy," it might be sufficient to say, that if he really volunteered an attack upon this verse, and also upon the reading Θεος, 1 Tim. iii. 16, in order to strengthen the cause of Trinitarianism, it is somewhat strange that he has no where left indisputable proof of

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* *Whiston's Memoirs, pp.* 293, 294.

attachment to that cause. But he has himself precluded all doubt on the subject, by his own paraphrase of the first of these passages, freed from the interpolation. "*Who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God*, that Son spoken of in the Psalms, where he saith; 'Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.' *This is he, that*, after the Jews had long expected him, *came* first in a mortal body *by* baptism of *water, and* then in an immortal one by shedding his *blood;* being the Son of God, as well by his resurrection from the dead, (Acts xiii. 33,) as by his supernatural birth of the Virgin. (Luke i. 35.) *And it is the Spirit* also, *that*, together with the water and blood, *beareth witness* of the truth of his coming; *because the Spirit is truth*, and so a fit and unexceptionable witness.—*For there are three that bear record* of his coming; *The Spirit*, which he promised to send; and which was since shed forth upon us in the form of cloven tongues, and in various gifts; *the* baptism of *water*, wherein God testified, 'This is my beloved Son;' *and the* shedding of his *blood*, accompanied with his resurrection, whereby he became the most faithful martyr, or witness of this truth. *And these three*, the Spirit, the Baptism, and Passion of Christ, *agree in* witnessing *one*, and the same thing; (namely, that the Son of God is come,) and, therefore, their evidence is strong: For the law requires but two consenting witnesses, and here we have three: *And if we receive the witness of men, the* threefold *witness* of God, which he bare of his Son, by declaring at his baptism, 'This is my beloved Son;' by raising him from the dead, and by pouring out his Spirit on us, *is greater*; and, there-

fore, ought to be more readily received."* Is this the language of orthodoxy? Was the author of this paraphrase an Athanasian? So much for your defence of the orthodoxy of the Author of the *Principia*; for which, I doubt whether you will receive the thanks of those who are anxious to prevent the Unitarians from claiming the association of his great name.

I must still take leave, whether I "honourably panegyrize" him or not, to speak of "the very respectable Dr. EDMUND LAW, as 'the Unitarian Bishop of Carlisle.'" For such, without doubt, he was. That "he died a Prelate of the National Establishment, I may be allowed to regret, without grounding on it any charge unfavourable to his integrity. Had he followed the example of the noble confessors, Lindsey, Jebb, W. Robertson, and others who might be named, who hazarded the loss of all things for what they esteemed the truth, I should have admired him more; but the spirit of a martyr falls not upon every one; and as he has borne his testimony to the truth, for which he could not consent to suffer, I will still honour his memory. Far be it from me to "judge another man's servant. To his own master he standeth or falleth." Even where the way of duty may seem most plain and easy to one, it may be to another both less clear and beset with the most formidable difficulties. And when I consider all that is implied in the resignation of the Episcopal office, by a Prelate advanced in years, and the father of a numerous family, though I cannot justify, I will not condemn. A pious, conscientious man in such a si-

* *Two Letters of Sir Isaac Newton, &c. pp. 74, 75.*

tuation, is an object of pity; condemnation should fall on those who require a profession of faith which Jesus and his Apostles have not authorized.* But you will not allow us to claim the association of this honourable name. You ask, 'to what Τρεφαι Φρενλιδες, what MSS. Letters, what 'Papers in possession of a noble family,' the author of the *Three Letters*, can refer in justification of this character of Bishop Law?' "If from that Prelate's Works, of various dates," you add, "I produce evidences of his adult and mature reasoning in favour, more or less, of the Orthodox Creed, I shall probably be encountered by something babbled or scribbled amidst those infirmities of declining life, against which no preceding vigour of intellect can furnish any guarantee. Some Postreme Thoughts, some hoarded Epistle, addressed to I know not whom, some surmised palinode withheld by the discretion of a friend, or the folly of an idiot, may be brought forward with a view of invalidating my statement: at all hazards, it shall be made." The hazards will be found, I believe, to be greater than you are aware.

As I do not mean to contend that this excellent Prelate was an Anti-Trinitarian in the early part of his life, I might pass by, unnoticed, your reference to his controversy with Jackson on the Existence and Unity of God, in his Thirty-Second year; for, unless you mean to shew that he was not a Trinitarian merely, but a Tritheist in the fullest sense of that term, I see not what is to be answered by your observation, that he argued

* See the fine and touching reflections of *Lardner* at the conclusion of his account of the Council of Nice. (*Works, Vol. iv. 8vo. edit. p.* 194, &c.)

generally in his '*Inquiries into the Ideas of Space and Time*,' that "several independent Beings, all supposed to be equally good, wise, &c. may be conceived to conspire together in every thing that is good and wise; that such acting in concert, will not render them dependent or imperfect, &c. as ten clocks may strike together without depending one upon another, so may as many voluntary Beings *agree in one*." Are we then, to suppose that Bishop Law in his Thirty-Second year, considered the three Persons of the Trinity, as much independent upon one another, as any three of those ten clocks? But if I understand the doctrine of the Trinity, as it is generally professed, (which, I acknowledge is by no means easy, as language is not adequate to the subject, and 'quot homines, tot sententiæ,') three Persons are not understood to be three independent Gods. Indeed this controversy between the disciples of Dr. Clarke and their opponents, on the *a priori* argument for the existence, unity, and perfections of God, appears to me to have nothing to do with the Scripture doctrine of the Trinity; and so, if I mistake not, it appeared to Dr. Law himself. For in a passage, which, (as it has happened in other cases,) you have had the misfortune to overlook, though it occurs in the very chapter from which you have made the preceding citations, desirous of repelling an insinuation which Jackson had thrown out; "as if, because we cannot allow the *Unity* to be demonstrable *a priori*, that therefore, we don't think it capable of any proof, or don't believe it all, or oppose it purely out of a *prejudice in favour of the scheme of Polytheism, or Ditheism, or Tritheism*:" he observes, "As to the received doctrine of the Trinity, I can assure him that I have scarce ever thought of it in the course

of this debate." * And then, 'to obviate all suspicions of this kind,' he produces a long passage from Mr. Nye, 'one of the shrewdest Unitarians that perhaps England ever bred,' who gave up the natural proof of the Unity very deliberately, and went not a step further than he had done. How then does "it appear, the writer discerned no antecedent presumption against the Scriptural tenet of the Trinity"? Certainly from nothing that occurs in this work.

But (p. 41,) there is a "*Dissertation on the argument* a priori," *&c. by a learned Hand*, attached to the above work, (and, therefore, presumptively sanctioned by its author,) in which it is *specially* remarked, that this kind of argument, or some appendages of it, 'look not very favourably toward Revealed Religion, particularly as to the Article of the Trinity,' which is immediately afterward denominated 'one of the prime Fundamentals of the Gospel.'" You may, certainly, if you please, presume from this circumstance, that Law was at this time a Trinitarian, but it is no necessary consequence. All that we are fairly entitled to conclude from his having attached this *Dissertation* to his own *Inquiries*, is, that he approved of it, as containing much curious learning, and powerful argument, and, therefore, affording him valuable aid in his "attempt to overturn the principles on which Dr. Clarke's celebrated demonstrations are founded." We have no right to conclude, that he coincided in every particular sentiment incidentally expressed by the *learned Hand*.

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* *Inquiries, &c. p.* 177.

Were I to grant, that at the period to which these works belong, he did regard the doctrine of the Trinity as one of the prime Fundamentals of the Gospel, I might still "triumphantly ask, (p. 41,) What were his subsequent conclusions?" "Unfortunately," you add, "I can trace them to a period later by *no more than Forty years;* thus leaving a mighty residuum of nearly Thirteen additional ones, as he died at Eighty-four, for the sagacity and the industry of Socinian investigation." That 'mighty residuum' might be enough for my purpose; but permit me to ask, Sir, whether in no part of the *Forty years*, you can trace the progress of the ever active and inquiring mind of this excellent Prelate towards that system which I maintain, and will endeavour to prove he finally adopted; and which warrants me, not to "stigmatize," or to "brand," but to honour him with the name of Unitarian.

Is there no difference between the *third* Edition of his *Considerations on the Theory of Religion*, published in 1755, and the *sixth* Edition, published in 1774? You have, indeed, cited a passage from the latter, which you do not find, you say, either in the first or the third. But does the insertion of that passage prove that he had been growing more orthodox in his views? By no means. If he were a Trinitarian when he published the third Edition, it shows that he had become an Arian before he published the sixth. But there are more important variations than this. An accurate collation of the third and sixth Editions, such as by the kindness of a friend I have now before me, will discover many omissions, and many additions, and many references, manifesting the progress of the excellent

author's mind, and enabling the curious and judicious reader to trace the steps by which he advanced to the more Scriptural and more rational opinions he at last maintained. I wish I had time and space to allow of my placing, as I once intended, passages from these Editions in parallel columns. But as you appear to possess both of them, you may easily satisfy yourself that I assert nothing for which I have not abundant authority. I ask only that you would compare in these two Editions that part of the work entitled '*Reflections on the Life and Character of Christ*,' and I think you will be convinced that you may add *twenty years* at least to the '*thirteen*' which you have graciously allowed "for the sagacity and the industry of Socinian investigation."

But "has the Archdeacon of Cleveland forgotten—for he may be offended, if I suspect him of the 'Sciolism' of never having known *—that" Bp. Law published not only a *sixth*, but a SEVENTH Edition of his *Considerations*; from which *every passage you have quoted, or referred to, is expunged!* And not only these, but every other which the *sixth* contained, of a similar complexion? The preceding Edition was throughout perfectly consistent with Anti-Trinitarian sentiments;† but the seventh is, so far as I can per-

* *See Charge, &c. p. 46.*

† The theological readers of the Archdeacon of Cleveland's Appendix, might suspect this, not only from the tenor of the passage concerning the Angel of God, which he has produced with so much parade, but from his own observation in the note affixed to it, that "the same point is well proved in the second and third Letters of the Rev. Henry Taylor's 'Apology of *Benj. Ben Mordecai*,'" a work decidedly Anti-Trinitarian, written upon the principles of high Arianism. Indeed neither the sixth nor the third Edition of the

ceive, completely and strictly Unitarian. Not a vestige of the doctrine of the Trinity is to be traced: even the doctrine of *the pre-existence of Christ* disappears; every passage relating to it in the former editions, being carefully excluded. No mention is made of the popular doctrine of the Atonement, or of any of what are so falsely, but so generally called, the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel. In the sixth edition he had said, (p. 275,) "Let us begin where the beloved disciple dates his gospel, (who had much higher manifestations, and a more perfect knowledge of his Master than any other of the Evangelists,) and with him reflect a little on Christ's original state and subsequent humiliation. That a Being of inconceivable perfections should divest himself of every glorious attribute, and appear not only in the form, but real nature of man, and in its most imperfect and forlorn estate. That he should be content to recover his former qualities, one by one, in slow degrees," &c. &c. and again, (p. 288,) "Having denied himself the comforts and enjoyments of this world, in the same cause for which he left the glories of the other, and at length laid down his life in executing that scheme for which he first assumed it," &c. &c. But observe how these passages appear in the seventh edition, (p. 289,) "That the great Messenger and mediator of a new covenant, fixed in the divine decrees from the beginning,

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*Considerations* clearly contain any other view of the original nature of Christ, than that of a pre-existent spirit, employed by God in the creation and government of the world, and in communicating his will to the Patriarchs and their descendants. Again let me ask Is the Archdeacon of Cleveland 'a master of Israel, and knoweth not these things'? But I should observe that the Archdeacon cautiously undertakes to 'produce evidences of his adult and mature reasoning in favour more *or less*, of the orthodox Creed.'

foretold by the ancient prophets, and announced by a host of angels, that he should at length appear, not only in the form, but real nature of man, and in its most imperfect and forlorn state, &c. That he should receive the divine communications in slow degrees," &c. &c. And again, (*p.* 297.) "Having denied himself the comforts and enjoyments of this world, and at length laid down his life in executing the great plan of conducting men to a better," &c. &c. Do such variations (and many such might be cited) betray no important change in the mind that dictated them? Or can the nature and extent of that change be at all doubtful?

Will you then place this *seventh* edition of the *Considerations* amongst "things babbled or scribbled amidst the infirmities of declining life?" In so doing, you may indeed plead the sanction of a dutiful son of this venerable prelate, but I think you will hardly be supported by any impartial person, who will read this last literary labour of the venerable author, and compare it with the edition he had published ten years before. "As to the insinuation," justly observes Mr. Belsham,* "surely much to be regretted, that 'little stress is to be laid upon any change of opinion at such an advanced period of life,' the observation would (might) have been perfectly correct, had it related to a relapse of the learned prelate into the errors of childhood; for that is the common retrograde movement of frail human nature. But, when the change alluded to appears to have been an advance upon preceding acquisitions, in consequence

* *A Letter to the Unitarian Christians in S. Wales, &c. p.* 92.

of further and persevering inquiries, and when the work which he published at that time, does not contain the slightest indication of a debilitated intellect, we cannot but conclude, that, though his *outward man* was perishing, his inward man was in full vigour: and that at the age of fourscore, the Bishop was as competent to judge of the validity of an argument, as others are in the prime, or in the meridian of life." However painful, then, it may be to the feelings of his pious son, Dr. G. Law, (now Bishop of Bath and Wells,) the uniform, and not very moderate opposer of the principles which his father deliberately adopted, and of that class of Christians, for whom his father ever manifested a high esteem, the name of Dr. Edmund Law "will be handed down to future ages," not "as an abettor of the doctrines of Socinus," but as "the Unitarian Bishop of Carlisle." *

That WHITBY became a Unitarian, you cannot deny. By the publication of his '*Last Thoughts*,' he has prevented the possibility even of doubt. You allow us, therefore, to claim the association of his name; but, at the same time, you would fain persuade us that it is not

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* I could have cited "a hoarded epistle, addressed" not "to we know not whom," but to the very well known Theoph. Lindsey, on having received a copy of his *Historical View of the State of the Unitarian Doctrine, &c.* dated Cambridge, Sept. 23, 1783, in which the following passage occurs: "I received the favour of your Historical View, and read it with satisfaction. You appear to have cleared up all the passages of Scripture usually alleged in favour of the contrary opinion, and to have exhausted the subject. As a small return for the obligation, I must desire your acceptance of a new Cumberland edition of my Theory, *purged of some ancient prejudices relative to preexistence, &c. &c.*" See *Belsham's Memoirs of Lindsey, p.* 163.

worth having. It not only "almost," but altogether (p. 45,) "disturbs your moderation to hear it sturdily maintained that a *whole rabble* of arguments, suddenly bursting upon him *in his senility*, (the '*poor old man*' lived to the age of eighty-eight,) had fairly encountered, and by mere superiority of force overset his preceding and long-maintained conclusions." And, "though you willingly give him credit for conscientiousness in his retractation, you cannot help subjoining, (as the only alternative apparently left to his character,) that he must either in his most vigorous period have contemned truth, or in the comparative decrepitude of his understanding, embraced error." A very candid conclusion, truly! It might, however, be quite as fair, and quite as reasonable, and somewhat more honourable to his character, to conclude, that having during the former part of his life embraced error, in the apparent guise of truth, he at length detected his mistake, and made all the reparation in his power, by abjuring what he had embraced, and openly pleading the cause of what he had rejected. This mode of accounting for his conduct will prevent the hard necessity of being compelled to insult the memory of this upright confessor, and of ungraciously refusing to give credit to his words.

May I be permitted to ask, Sir, whether you are acquainted with the "Postreme Thoughts" of the venerable Precentor of Sarum? And may I be further permitted to request, that you will point out the passages in that work that discover even a "comparative decrepitude of understanding"? None such, I confess, are apparent to me. It bears testimony throughout, to an intellect as vigorous, to say the least, and to a judg-

ment as sound, as mark his '*Commentary*', or any of his preceding writings. He had certainly no consciousness of failing powers, nor does any thing in this work warrant others to suspect it. "This my retractation," he observes in the preface to his '*Last Thoughts*,' "or change of my opinion, after all my former endeavours to assert and establish a contrary doctrine, deserves the more to be considered, because it proceeds (and, indeed, *can* proceed) from me for no other reason, but purely from the strong and irresistible convictions which are now upon me, that I was *mistaken*. Nothing, I say, but the love of truth can be supposed to extort such a *Retractation* from me, who having already lived so long beyond the common period of life, can have nothing else to do but to prepare for my great change; and in order thereunto to make my peace with God, and my own conscience, before I die. To this purpose I solemnly appeal to the searcher of hearts, and call God to witness, whether I have *hastily* or *rashly* departed from the common opinion; or rather, whether I have not *deliberately* and *calmly* weighed the arguments on both sides, drawn from Scripture and antiquity. If I have erred in changing my opinion, I desire it may be observed, that my error hath neither prejudice nor secular view to support it; and that my mistake (if such it will be reputed,) hath been all along attended with constant prayers to the throne of grace, and what hath always appeared to me to be the strongest reason, and most undeniable evidence. And even yet, if any will be so kind, as in the spirit of meekness, to answer the arguments I have produced to justify my change, if it please God to give me the same degree of health, and SOUNDNESS OF MIND, which by his blessing and

goodness, I NOW ENJOY, I promise sincerely to consider them, and to act suitably to the strength of the argument; but if any such answer is attempted with angry invectives, and haughty sophistry, aiming to be wise above what is written, I must say μενωμεν ὁποιοι εσμεν, i. e. *I must remain in my present sentiments*; having in this short Treatise seriously considered all that I had said in my *Commentary* to the contrary, and fully answered the most considerable places I had then produced for confirmation of doctrines I there too hastily endeavoured to establish." * Whatever arguments in defence of Anti-Trinitarianism, the venerable writer "had previously known, and weighed, and rejected," we have here his own soleman declaration that in the opinion he had formed of them he was mistaken; that he had *deliberately* and *calmly*, and in a *sound state of mind*, weighed them again, and found them 'wanting.' But the 'poor old man' was 'in his senility,' in some part of the last sixteen years of a life that reached to eighty-eight, and *consequently*, "in the comparative decrepitude of his understanding!" Such a consequence, at least, you would have us draw. But for this purpose, it is not enough to number the days of the 'poor old man.' As wisdom "is not that which standeth in length of time," so is it not uniformly impaired by increase of years. "Manent ingenia senibus, modo permaneat studium et industria." You must give us proof from his posthumous work, of 'decrepitude of understanding,' before we consent to think lightly of one

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* *The Last Thoughts of Dr. Whitby*, (*Preface.*)

who was called to the knowledge of the truth at the eleventh hour.* He was not, however, wholly unprepared for the call; as will be evident to any who will observe the tendency of his '*Disquisitiones Modestæ in Clarissimi Bulli Defensionem, &c.*' and his '*Replies to Dr. Waterland,*' in the same controversy.

Though by no means inclined to rank ROBERT ROBINSON "among the *Illustrissimi* of Socinianism," I cannot part with him as a Unitarian. "Strikingly scanty as the space" may be, which, after all your nice calculations, "is left for his alleged change of opinions; it is long enough for such a change to have taken place: and I still confidently maintain, that it did take place. Besides the evidence I formerly produced,† we have the direct testimony of Dyer, whom you rightly denominate his honest Biographer. Speaking of the well-known proceedings in the University of Cambridge against Mr. Frend, on account of his Unitarianism, he says,‡ "Robinson's connexion with Frend, and with others, maintaining similar tenets, (as Curwan, just before mentioned, an old acquaintance of Robinson's, who had lately embraced the doctrine of the Unitarians,) tended, probably, to *confirm his convictions*, and to incline him to adopt a more decided tone, as to doctrines in his public discourses; though he remained to

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* From some instances that have fallen under my notice, I suspect that a convert from Unitarianism to Trinitarianism, at any age, whether fourteen or fourscore, and in any circumstances, even *in articulo mortis*, would pass with some orthodox zealots as a person of sound judgment and vigorous understanding.

† See *Three Letters, &c.* ‡ *Memoirs, p.* 316.

the last, rather a friend to liberty than to precision of religious sentiment, or to strict theological language." Again, speaking of his 'Ecclesiastical Researches,' he observes, "From the specimens already produced, it must appear that this history is not a mere narrative of religious sentiments. The author *was evidently an Unitarian in opposition to an Athanasian.*" And this, be it remarked, was his last and favourite work: to the severe application, with which he engaged in this and his *History of Baptism*, he fell an untimely sacrifice." (*Mem.* p. 351.) Once more, his Biographer in reviewing his character, says, "To speak freely, it seems a part less liable to ambiguity, and less subject to contradiction, to consider him, at the close of life, as a man of literature, than as a divine: as to his precise character in this last respect, it is safer to say what he was not; than what he was. He was not a bigot—he was not an enthusiast—he was not a superstitious man—he was not a Calvinist—*he was not a Trinitarian.*"

You appear to lay much stress, (pp. 46, 47,) on "his celebrated '*Plea for the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ;*'" and also on the circumstance that "the Writer never, even amidst the vacillations, the infirmities, or the compliances of advancing life—otherwise, at least, than in alleged sarcasms, or dubious Letters—either qualified, or suppressed" this Work. Yet his 'honest biographer' informs us, that though "much solicited to reply to *Lindsey's Examination*, more particularly as his opponents carried themselves masters of the field, and expressed the language of triumph, Robinson made no reply." (*Memoirs*, p. 112.) What are we to conclude from his silence, but that he was conscious that he had

written what could not be defended? especially as his Biographer has shown (p. 114,) that 'his mind was not clear from embarrassment when he wrote the *Plea*.' Robinson endeavoured, indeed, to excuse his silence by alleging "that the Examiner had not touched his arguments; that his spirit was bitter and contemptuous, and that his *faith stood on criticisms*." Aye, there was the rub. The '*Plea*' abounds in declamation, and possesses little argument; it is by no means deficient in confidence of assertion, but disclaims the labour of proof; it appears to exhibit a mass of Scripture authority, but the passages are removed from their just connexion, and generally misapprehended and misapplied. It is a publication that cannot stand the test of sound scriptural criticism; the test applied by the learned Examiner, and Robinson not having cultivated or sufficiently valued that branch of learning, found himself unequal to task of entering upon a defence. Nor is it improbable that the Examiner's criticisms and arguments had shaken his already weak faith more than he was willing to own; more, perhaps, than he was aware. Since you pay so much and such just deference to his honest Biographer, it is a pity that you overlooked his concluding remark on this book; which holds so distinguished a place in your estimation. "Before this chapter closes," says he, (p. 119,) "justice requires the following observation. The *Plea for the Divinity of Christ*, Robinson always professed to be rather a *Sabellian* than a Trinitarian book, that its object was not to defend the strictly orthodox side of the question." Surely the Archdeacon of Cleveland cannot be aware of this, or he would not so confidently refer to this volume as unanswered and unanswerable. This how-

ever, is not inconsistent with your professed attachment to Watts and Wallis and Doddridge; but it indicates an approach towards Socinianism, that must be contemplated by all good Churchmen with alarm. One thing I with pleasure anticipate; that as you join Robinson in objecting to a faith that "stands on criticisms;" and adopt his "argument, that if the doctrine require critical proof, it is not popular, and therefore, not divine," you will not in future be so inconsistent as to deduce any arguments for the Deity of Christ, from niceties in the usage of Greek articles.—That Archdeacon Blackburne, a person of such sound judgment, should approve of this '*Plea*,' and even think it unanswerable, excites my astonishment.* I still maintain that *Lindsey's* '*Examination*' of it "contained 'a complete refutation.'" But I wish no one "to take my assurance:" let those who are really desirous of forming an impartial judgment, read the two works for themselves: I have no doubt as to the result.

Another evidence of Robinson's adherence to orthodox opinions, is this, that "Ten years after the publication of the '*Plea*,' and within four of his decease, at the age of Fifty-One, he published his '*Sixteen Discourses*, &c.'" From the fifth of these, you have tran-

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* Archdeacon Blackburne, we are told, "after the lapse of six years, could not, with much inquiry, discover that any answer to it had been given." Mr. Lindsey has sufficiently explained this. "When I at any time inquired, why no notice was taken from the press of this new *Plea*, which had much vogue at the first; all I could learn, was, that it was looked upon as so very superficial, and had so little argument in it, that it could not long deceive any one, and needed no confutation." (*Examination*, *p.* 3.)

scribed an extract which unquestionably savours strongly of orthodoxy. If the general character of these *Discourses*, and the preacher of them be fully considered, they will afford very unsatisfactory evidence of his soundness in the faith, at any time, and none at all of the complexion of his sentiments between the time at which they were published, and his death. "One circumstance," says his 'honest biographer,' "will not fail to strike an attentive reader of the *Sermons* and *Morning Exercises:* they had been delivered several years back, during the author's more immediate connexion with the Calvinistical party: he must, consequently, have preserved notes: *a kind of awkward and spurious orthodoxy distinguishes them;* such sentiments and language as even Calvinists might think savoury meat, and such as heretics could sit down to with pleasure;... in short, these *Sermons* exhibit a man attempting to reconcile incongruities, and to perform impossibilities: setting off, at one time, like an orthodox man, and ending like an heretic, or setting off like a heretic, and ending like an orthodox man: a Calvinist and Socinian might unite in saying of them what the ingenious author of the *Indian Cottage* says of Error; 'I cannot better compare it, than to the glare of a fire which destroys the dwellings that it enlightens.' But though the preacher often trifles; the philanthropist more frequently charms: though you may not always understand his creed, you cannot fail to be caught by his benevolence; and in the man you lose sight of the divine."* My former position, then, that Robinson became a Unitarian before his

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* *Dyer's Memoirs of Robinson, p.* 268.

death, is not disproved or rendered dubious by any thing you have advanced.

Of WALLIS, I say nothing more; you "will have the last word:" and I will not deprive you of the luxury. It is such a last word as every controversial writer would, with perfect satisfaction, concede to his adversary.

As I have not claimed for the Unitarians, the association of the distinguished names of SIMON EPISCOPIUS and CONRAD VORSTIUS, I do not feel myself called upon to inquire, whether they were rightly or wrongly "both characterized in their day as Socinians."* Nor am I bound to contend for GROTIUS, HOADLY, or CHILLINGWORTH. I do not profess to hold a general retainer for Unitarian writers of all ages and nations; nor does my avowed object require that I should justify every position which any of them may have advanced, or contest with you every point which you may choose to moot. All that I undertook relating to the present subject, in the *Three Letters*, was to show, that the grounds on which you denied our right to speak of Newton, and Locke, and Watts, as Anti-Trinitarians, were altogether weak and insufficient. I thought I had succeeded; but this you will not allow: I have therefore deemed it de-

* Vorstius, however, has a place in the *Bibliotheca Anti-Trinitariorum*, an honour to which he appears to have been justly entitled. "Diu dubius fui," says Sandius, "num istum auctorem, huic catalogo nostro merito insererem. Verùm dubitationem hanc, præter alia, sustulit, cum legissem confessionem fidei manu ipsius exaratam: in quâ haud obscurè prodit, quæ ejus de Deo ac Christo Domino fuerit sententia. Insuper in quanam æstimatione Vorstius Sarmatarum Unitariorum scripta habuerit, palam est."

sirable, if not necessary, to examine the new arguments by which you have endeavoured, in the Appendix to your last Charge, to establish the orthodoxy of these illustrious persons; and to prove that they have no force. I have done, therefore, all that it was needful for me to do. Whether I have succeeded or no, I leave to the decision of all impartial persons who shall deign to peruse these pages. One question I beg leave to ask before I conclude this part of my subject. How has it happened that these excellent persons fell under the suspicion of a defective faith? How are we to account for the curious fact, that they were not only claimed by the Unitarians of their day, but, if not absolutely disowned, yet generally suspected, or accused of heresy by zealous Trinitarians? Did they give no cause for for being thus suspected by one party, and claimed by the other?

I must now crave permission to say a few words in vindication of myself. On this subject I would most willingly be silent; but for reasons which I have already stated. Justifying your repetition of the stale charges, brought against Unitarians by preceding writers, you say, (p. 22,) "Had I, indeed, embarked in what Blackwall would perhaps have termed the 'remarkably impudent' project of superseding *propriis viribus* the authorised translation of the Scriptures, achieved with vast labour by no fewer than Forty-Seven distinguished Orientalists at the beginning of the Seventeenth Century, I might reasonably have been required to prove my competency for the task by offering something new—not in the way of a blunder or a sophism—but as an 'Improved Version' of a difficult or disputed text." In

this, Sir, I perfectly agree with you. And had I also embarked in such a project, I should deserve not merely to be called 'remarkably impudent,' but to be accounted guilty of unpardonable presumption and folly. The work on which I am engaged, and to which you allude, has been undertaken at the request of many friends, not to supersede the authorized translation, but to provide for families and individuals of that Class of Christians to which I have the happiness to belong, a version, which being free from the bias of a theological system, that they consider as erroneous, may be used by them, with pleasure and advantage. Beyond that class it was not expected, nor was it designed, to extend. To use the words of Jerom, who did not escape an imputation similar to that which you have cast upon me, "Nemo cogitur legere, quod non vult. Ego petentibus scripsi, non fastidiosis; gratis, non invidis; studiosis, non oscitantibus." That Unitarians should wish to have a revised edition of the authorized translation, (and that is all which the work you censure, aspires to be thought,) is not a matter either of wonder or of blame. As a Catholic Version would not be acceptable to Protestants, and as the Genevan Version did not satisfy our Episcopalian ancestors, it cannot be expected that the Version by king James's translators, who, "like all other translators of their day, were too much guided by theological system," should be in every respect satisfactory to those who reject their system. But too much has been written, even by some of the most learned and judicious members of your own Church, on the defects and faults of the authorized translation, and the necessity of a

revision of it, to make it necessary for me to justify an attempt however humble, to supply a small class of Christians with what is confessedly an object of general importance.

But that I should embark alone even in this limited project, you may still consider as a proof of 'remarkable impudence.' Is then the translation of the Scriptures by an individual, I would ask, so unheard of an undertaking as justly to expose me to such a censure? Did not Aquila, and Theodotion, and Symmachus, each in his turn attempt, singly, to supersede the Greek Version, achieved not by Forty-Seven, but, as it is said at least, by Seventy-Two? And from the fragments which remain of the last of the three, have we not reason to conclude that his work greatly excelled that of Alexandria?* Was not the Latin Version accomplished by Jerom *propriis viribus*? And excellent as that is, and deservedly entitled, independently of the sanction of papal authority, to high estimation, will any one presume to censure Leo Juda, Castalio, Erasm. Schmidt, Le Clerc, or Houbigant for having embarked in the project of New Versions? Was not the first vernacular version in Europe, achieved by Luther, and with such success, that to this day "it retains, in a great measure, its first celebrity?" And no one blames Michaelis or De Wette for undertaking New Versions in the same language. Do we not owe one of the most beautiful and correct of modern trans-

* "Ut quisque fuit Græcarum litterarum scientissimus, ita Symmachiæ in primis Versionis elegantiam et munditiem omnibus fere numeris absolutam admiratus semper est maxime et laudavit verissime."—*(Fischeri Prolus. de Vers. Gr. p. 7.)*

lations, the Italian Bible, to Diodati? and will not the names of Fevre D'Estaples, René Benoit, and Le Cene of France; Cassiodore de Reyna, and Cyprien de Valere of Spain; Resenius of Denmark; and many others, which it is unnecessary for me to call to your recollection, be honoured for their respective labours, however short of perfection, in some instances, the results may have fallen? Were not our ancestors indebted for their knowledge of the Scriptures, first of all to the individual labours of Wicliff, and afterwards to those of Tindal, both of them not only unsupported, but discountenanced and opposed by the Churchmen of their days? I might here also refer to several eminent persons of our own times, Newcome, and Lowth, and Blayney, and Street, and Green, and Wintle, and Stock, to mention no more, who have enriched our libraries with valuable versions of different portions of the Sacred Volume: whose labours differ in extent and continuance, not in kind from those before enumerated. I must not pass unnoticed, a living translator, whose project, of a character far more adventurous than had been previously undertaken by any one, and such as, had it succeeded, must have brought every other Version into disrepute, received the sanction of many of the highest personages of the realm, in the Church as well as in the State. All these, I may be told, were men eminent for their talents and learning, who had fully "proved their competency for the task they undertook;" whereas I have offered nothing to evince my qualifications, but "in the way of a blunder or a sophism." Far be it from me to insinuate that I am worthy to be compared with even the least of those whom I have enumerated. I deeply feel, and willingly own my great

inferiority. Yet, if I had engaged in the work which I was invited to undertake, conscious that I was altogether incompetent to the task, I should have merited a more disgraceful reproach than that of being 'remarkably impudent.' As no knowledge is so rare, or of such difficult attainment, as the knowledge of self, I may have been deceived, and contrary to the Poet's well-known advice, may have chosen a subject to which my strength is unequal: I am not, however, disposed to acquiesce in the proof which you allege of my incompetency, drawn, as I suppose, from the last of the '*Three Letters*;' but throwing myself on the candour of those who are qualified to decide, I will refer to the results of my project which have already been given to the public: while to such as are determined to judge, without qualifying themselves to form a right decision by personal examination, I say in the words of Jerom, "Legant prius et postea despiciant; ne videantur, non ex judicio, sed ex odii presumptione, ignorata damnare."

I did not embark in the project of revising the authorized translation, for the use of a few of my fellow-Christians, not of superseding it, without being fully aware of the difficulty of the undertaking, and of the misrepresentations, and the obloquy to which I must inevitably be exposed. "Periculosum opus certè, et obtrectatorum latratibus patens." But the motives by which I was induced to enter upon the work, will, I trust, support and animate me as I proceed, and afford me consolation, whatever may be the issue. If I prove, in any measure successful, "the temporary offence to the prejudiced will be outweighed by

the judgment of the reasonable;" * if unhappily I fail, as many have in a greater or less degree failed in a similar undertaking before me, I shall have the satisfaction of reflecting that I have been employed, at least as usefully and as suitably to my profession, as I should have been had I "spent ten or twelve years upon Horace or Terence," or devoted myself to "the study of the Orators and Poets, the Historians and Philosophers" of Greece and Rome. †

One other passage in your Appendix, (p. 63,) in which I am personally concerned, I must not neglect to notice. Alluding to a remark in the first of my '*Three Letters*,' concerning the hardship we suffer in not being allowed to share with our countrymen in the advantages of a University education, ‡ you say, "Let

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* *Abp. Newcome's Hist. View, &c. p.* 380.

† See *Bp. Hare's Difficulties and Discouragements, &c. p.* 37.

‡ Among many subjects of admiration and praise that offer themselves to the notice of learned foreigners on visiting this country, there is one which excites at once their astonishment and disapprobation, the exclusion of all who are not members of the religious sect established by law, from the places of national instruction. Such a barbarism is unknown in any country on the Continent, and is a disgrace to the enlightened and generally liberal spirit of England. "Male accidit, ut nostræ Universitates, eo minus sint liberales, quo magis locupletes. Quippe res vix recte se habet, dum uni tantum sectæ, ecclesiæ nempe Anglicanæ, Scholariis, Sodalitiis, et aliis academicis beneficiis frui permittitur; ceteras vero omnes a philosophiâ, bonis literis, gradibus Academicis, et commodis quæ cum iis conjungi solent, ejecisse, minus sapit liberalitatem. Talis vero est effectus Subscriptionum et juramentorum nunc existentium." See *Dyer's Privileges of the Univ. of Camb. Diss. Gen. p. cxliv.*; where are many other observations relating to the same subject deserving the attention of those whom they peculiarly concern.

them not, however, affect to refer their imputed inferiority of literature to their 'unjust' exclusion from our Universities; since we are authoritatively informed, that, from the soundness, extent, and accuracy of Mr. Wellbeloved's erudition, from his persevering earnestness, and perspicuous simplicity in communicating knowledge, his judicious method of elucidation, and his depth of research," &c. &c. "those, who are engaged with him, in the study of the Greek Tragedians, Historians, and Philosophers, '*have no cause to envy the more splendid advantages of the Halls of learning.*' Such is the assurance of Dr. Carpenter," &c. &c. "Human fallibility," you observe in the very page from which I have transcribed this extract, "will both account and apologize, for some mistakes;" and if candour be, like other virtues, improved by exercise, your controversial writings may be fitly recommended as adapted to perfect those who read them, in this Christian excellence. Indeed, Sir, Dr. Carpenter, has given the world no such assurance of 'Mr. Wellbeloved's erudition', nor has he said, that any persons are engaged with him in the study of the Greek Tragedians, Historians, and Philosophers. He has indeed inserted 'a statement of the Course of Biblical study pursued in the Academical Institution at York', but with the exception of one or two epithets, which I sincerely wish he had not used, he has passed no encomium on myself; and for this I do most cordially thank him. The passage which you have cited, was not intended for me; and I assure you I have too great a dislike to compliments, to appropriate to myself any thing of that nature, which belongs to another. What you have converted into a sarcasm and a sneer, was designed

by Dr. Carpenter, to be a merited encomium on one whom I have not only the happiness to call a friend, and a colleague, but to reckon among the members of my family; and who excluded, as he has been, and that, I repeat, unjustly, from the "National Halls of learning," is inferior to the Archdeacon of Cleveland himself only in station and in years.

But enough of such personalities. It is high time to close a Letter which has extended so far beyond what I had anticipated, and which I fear cannot but prove uninteresting and tedious. I hope, however, I may flatter myself that what I have said will tend in some measure to determine a point, which, though in itself it is of little or no moment, has obtained importance from the manner in which it has been treated by yourself and others, and from the occasion it has furnished of censuring the conduct of Unitarians.

I am, Reverend Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

C. WELLBELOVED.

# LETTER III.

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"Thus saith the LORD the king of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of Hosts; I *am* the first, and I am the last; and beside me *there is* no God."—*Isaiah.*

"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."—*Jesus Christ.*

"I chuse rather to regulate my faith by what God hath delivered, than by what man hath defined."—*Abp. Wake.*

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REVEREND SIR,

YOU have allotted so small a portion of the Appendix to your last Charge, to the direct vindication of the Trinitarian doctrine, and the little you have said is so devoid both of novelty and force, that I might pass it by unnoticed, without becoming liable to the suspicion of doing so from a consciousness of inability to rebut your arguments, or to defend the cause you impugn. But as whatever you advance, however light and insignificant in itself, may derive weight and importance from your station and character, I cannot refrain from again at-

tempting to shew the intrinsic weakness and insufficiency of the scanty evidence you have once more collected in favour of Trinitarianism. I do not wish to overthrow your system by "destroying the credit and authority of your name;" but I do wish to shew that the manner in which you maintain and defend your cause, is not such as to serve its interests and to aid its triumphs; or in any measure to humble and alarm your opponents. For Unitarian Theologians you manifest, on all occasions, supreme contempt; but if you have given a fair specimen of your talents as a critic, and interpreter of Scripture, in your two last Charges, from you, of all men, they merit not such treatment.

"Be it the grace and glory of our adversaries," (thus you begin that part of your Appendix (p. 69,) to which I am now to attend,) "to struggle for the transposition of a comma, or the extrusion of a medial line in a Greek capital. It is not upon the niceties of philology, however exactly established, that We place the corner-stone of Christianity." No, Sir, you only struggle for *the retaining* of a medial line in a Greek capital, against the authority of the most ancient Greek MSS., the oldest versions, the most ancient Fathers, both Greek and Latin, as is evident from their comments, and all internal evidence; and make it your "grace and glory" to establish "our Saviour's Deity," by the niceties of the doctrine of the Greek article, by the "Canon of Suppression," applied to ὁ, ἡ, τὸ. There is an important difference between us, which, however, never seems to occur to you, that we have recourse to such "niceties of philology," only in self-defence; whereas your system cannot stand without them, however you

may affect to call them "subordinate evidences." We employ them, (very presumptuously, to be sure, considering how unlearned a sect we are, *Græcæ linguæ ferè experies*, according to the oracular Elsner,) only in justifying, not in propounding our creed. But to proceed—"We appeal" you say, "to sturdier arguments." And to prove it, and to let the world know what you mean by sturdier, you add, "If Christ, indeed, were merely a supplementary Prophet, of the character of Moses or Isaiah, to what end (as I have elsewhere asked) his insignia of more-than-human dignity—the announcing Star, the ministering Angel, the initiatory Baptism, the commemorative Supper, the brightness of Tabor, the darkness of Calvary, the rending Vail, the quaking Earth, and the opening Grave?" Ευγε, ("σοφως" I cannot say,) Ευγε, φιλοφωτ. Did the Star announce that the eternal God was born at Bethlehem? Did the Angel minister to the omnipresent Deity, wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger? Did the darkness of Calvary, and the quaking Earth, proclaim to the astonished world that the ever-living God was dying on a cross in Jerusalem? Was it He who existed from eternity, and to whose years there can be no end, that commanded his disciples to commemorate *his* death! Such positions are happily as inconsistent with Scripture, as they are contradictory to reason. The evangelists who relate these and other wonderful events, declare it to be their purpose, thus to prove "that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God," the long expected Messiah: and the apostles, even after the ascension of their Master into heaven, call upon their hearers to believe in "Jesus of Nazareth," as no more than "a man approved of God among them by miracles

and wonders and signs, which God did by him." And Jesus himself refers to some of those very circumstances which you have enumerated, as proofs, not that he was one with the Father, or possessed of more-than-human dignity, but only "that the Father had sent him."—You surely do not mean to assert that miracles decide any thing as to the nature of the person, either by whom, or on behalf of whom they are wrought. They are the proper attestations of a divine mission; and whatever be their number, or their character, they testify nothing more. The miracles that were wrought either by or for Jesus, had the same design as those which attended Moses, and were not in the one case any more than in the other, "insignia of more-than-human dignity." We do not regard Jesus Christ as merely a supplementary prophet: and though, according to the language of prophecy, as it is thought, he was a prophet "raised up by Jehovah from the midst of the Jews, like unto Moses," we assign to him a higher character than that of Moses or Isaiah. "Moses was, indeed, trusted as a servant, for publishing to all God's family whatever he had in charge: but Christ is trusted as a son over his own family, whose family we are." * The dignity of Christ, as Unitarians willingly allow, was far superior to that which had been enjoyed by any preceding messenger of the divine will; but all the dignity that he himself assumed, during his life, and all that his apostles ascribed to him, after his death, was consistent with his perfect humanity. It was dignity, not of person, but of office; indicated not so much by the miracu-

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* Heb. iii. 5, 6. See *Campbell's Lectures on Syst. Theol. p.* 166.

lous displays of divine power which accompanied him, as by the great and benevolent work in which he was engaged. It was dignity not eternally belonging to him as a person of the Godhead; but conferred upon him by his God and Father, who appointed him to be the head of the last and most perfect of his dispensations to the sons of men; and for his fidelity in the important service, and his obedience even unto death, "crowned him with glory and honour."

Again, you ask (p. 70,) "Why is he declared to have been *crucified for us*, to have *purchased the Church with his own blood*, and to have *redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us, that he might reconcile us to God by the cross?*" Clearly for no other reason than that so it was. We Unitarians firmly believe all these declarations, and rejoice in them, and yet we maintain that he was not the true and living God. Indeed the facts that he was crucified, shed his blood, and was made a curse, appear to us, as we think they must appear to every one who considers the nature of God, to prove most satisfactorily the simple humanity of Christ. But you observe, "Upon the orthodox hypothesis every thing throughout the whole Volume of Revelation perfectly quadrates. Is the disease infinite? An infinite remedy is provided." Then, Sir, you maintain that the act of a finite being may be infinite, and that an infinite being, who must be God himself, not merely the human nature of Christ, died! positions to which the Scriptures afford not the slightest sanction, and which might be thought too absurd for any reasonable person to maintain. But 'the excellent Archbishop Magee,' on whom you spend so many com-

pliments, but who will not, I apprehend, make you a return in kind, shall settle this matter with you. Speaking in his *Dissertations, No. xiii.* of 'the Misrepresentations of the doctrine of Atonement by Unitarians,' he observes, "On this subject, Dr. Priestley thus represents the arguments of the orthodox. 'Sin being an offence against an infinite Being, requires an infinite satisfaction, which can only be made by an infinite person; that is, one who is no less than God himself. Christ, therefore, in order to make this infinite satisfaction for the sins of men, must himself be God, equal to God the Father.'—With what candour this has been selected, as a specimen of the mode of reasoning by which the doctrine of Atonement, as connected with that of the divinity of Christ, is maintained by the established church, it is needless to remark. That some few, indeed, have thus argued, is certainly to be admitted and *lamented.* But *how poorly such men have reasoned,* it needed not the acuteness of Dr. Priestley to discover. On their own principle the reply is obvious; that sin being *committed by* a finite creature, requires only a finite satisfaction, for which purpose a finite person might be an adequate victim."* This is not the only place in which the Archbishop of Dublin leaves his more orthodox brethren in the lurch. Indeed, his views on the professed subject of his great work, fall so far below the standard of the popular Creed, that I am persuaded he would not have obtained the reputation he now possesses, had he not made his book the vehicle

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* *Discourses, &c. on the Atonement, Vol. I. p.* 171.

of abuse against the doctrine and the advocates of Unitarianism.

Having flourished a little more in the same style about *the Law* and *the Gospel*, you add, with somewhat more soberness,—"The simple questions, in truth, are these:—1. Are we able to comprehend the nature of God in any degree whatsoever, farther than he has been pleased to reveal it to us in his Holy Word?"—Certainly not: and no farther do We pretend to comprehend it. "Is He more fully known to these very wise men, than to Himself, the All-Wise; or are they able to speak more definitely of Him, than he has thought fit Himself to do in the Sacred Scriptures?" If by 'these very wise men,' you mean Unitarians, I can venture to answer for them that with as much sincerity and humility as any of those who condemn them for pride and presumption, they can join with Elihu, in the confession that "Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out." You proceed, "'Many mysteries there are to us,' says Leslie, 'in the Nature of God, which we all acknowledge: a First cause without a Beginning! A Being which neither made itself nor was made by any other! Infinite without Extension! In every place, yet circumscribed by no place, &c.'" Granted: but what have these 'simple questions,' or these simple assertions, to do with the more simple questions at issue between us;—Has God revealed himself to us in the Scriptures as being Three persons in one Godhead? Do the Sacred Writers teach us that Jesus Christ was the one only living and true God, and the second person in the Godhead? These are the only inquiries with which we are immediately concerned, and you might have spared yourself the trouble of

putting these 'simple questions,' and of adding to them the long note (p. 71,) about the one God of the Mahometans, and the two Gods of the Socinians; for they have nothing whatever to do with the controversy between Unitarians and Trinitarians.

But you proceed to inquiries of more importance: "2. In those Scriptures do we not read (amongst a thousand other texts,) as predicted of Christ by Isaiah, that his *name should be called* '*the Mighty God*;' and by Jeremiah, *the Lord our Righteousness?* Did not the former of those Prophets also foretell, that he should be denominated '*Emanuel*;' which, *being interpreted*, adds the inspired St. Matthew, (i. 23,) *is* '*God with us*'? Did not Christ himself, when he said to the Jews, 'Before Abraham was, I AM,' assume the peculiar and most jealously guarded title of the Supreme Being, (Exod. iii. 14,) and thus aver not simply his own Pre-existence, but that Self-existence which can be ascribed to God alone? And has he not in the Apocalypse, by a similar reference to the Old Testament, (Isai. xliv. 6,) 'I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last,' distinctly affirmed his unity with the *Lord of Hosts*? Did not Zechariah prophesy; In that day, saith the Lord (JEHOVAH, again) 'they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced;' and does not the inspired St. John, (xix. 37,) directly apply this to Christ?"—In the passage I have now transcribed, is all the Scripture proof of the Deity of Christ which you have thought it necessary to produce: for you very prudently resolve "not to requote Thomas' '*My Lord and my God*,' nor the *God manifest in the flesh* of 1 Tim. iii. 16; nor the *Christ who is over all*,

*God blessed for ever*, of Rom. ix. 5; nor the Father's address to the Son, '*Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever;*' nor the Invocation of Stephen, '*Lord Jesus receive my Spirit;*' nor the Baptismal Formula; nor, lastly, the Apostolical Benediction." Your resolution to say no more on these passages is much to be commended; as it is clearly a hopeless attempt, by means of these, to support your cause. Perhaps it would have been equally prudent to have abstained from citing any new texts; for these also, on due examination, will be found as little adapted to serve your purpose. They claim, however, some particular notice. I will take them in the order in which you have ranged them.

"In these Scriptures" then, you ask, "Do we not read (amongst a thousand texts) as predicted of Christ by Isaiah, that his *name should be called the Mighty God?*" It would be unjust to deny to an orator the use of figurative diction; the hyperbole of the thousand texts, relating of course to the Deity of Christ, in Isaiah, may, therefore, be suffered to pass without further notice. But before I give an affirmative reply to your question, I beg leave to ask, whether you are perfectly sure that the passage in Isaiah to which you refer, is indeed a prediction of Christ? You undoubtedly know that some eminent Christian interpreters have explained it as prophetic of an illustrious Jewish prince; and that others, among whom is Grotius, allow that in its first and literal sense, it is descriptive of the character, and reign of Hezekiah. Though separated by the injudicious division of chapters, in modern bibles, from the chapter which precedes it, it is, in truth, closely connected with that, and is the conclusion of a prophecy which manifestly relates to

events that were speedily coming upon the land of Judæa. And it is incumbent on those who would deduce from this passage a proof of the Deity of Christ, to shew the connexion between his birth, and his spiritual kingdom, and the invasion and defeat of Sennacherib, the king of Assyria. I might further require to be informed, why this magnificent prophecy, if it was designed to predict the coming, the office, and the character of Christ, was never cited by himself or his apostles? Is it credible that such a prediction should have been overlooked, or neglected? You will say, perhaps, that Matthew by quoting one part of the passage to which these words belong, (Comp. *Isa.* ix. 1, 2, with *Matt.* iv. 14—26,) has shewn that he interpreted what follows, as relating to the great subject of his history; but to this I might reply, and I think I could not be satisfactorily contradicted, that the evangelist has quoted that part in the way of *accommodation* only; which the most judicious commentators of all parties allow to be not an unfrequent practice of the Sacred Writers. But waving these points, (which, I confess, appear to me points of great importance,) and, for the sake of argument, allowing that the prophet has here in view the future Messiah, and that his words were accomplished in Jesus Christ, allow me to ask, whether we are to be satisfied with the present English version. As the passage has been very differently rendered by different translators from the time of the LXX. down to our own days, it becomes necessary to ascertain what is the true rendering, before we attempt to explain it; and especially before we infer from it such a doctrine as you imagine it inculcates. For our views of the meaning of the passage will be very different

according to the version we adopt: whether that of the Jewish Targumist, 'And his name shall be called by the Wonderful in counsel, by the Mighty God, by Him who endureth for ever, The Messiah, whose peace shall be multiplied upon us in his days,' or, 'in whose days prosperity shall be multiplied upon us;' or that of the LXX. 'And his name shall be called 'The Messenger of a great counsel,' for I will bring peace upon the rulers, and health to him;' or that of Grotius, 'Wonderful, Counsellor of the Mighty God, Father of the future age, Prince of peace;' or that of Bp. Lowth, 'Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Father of the everlasting age, the Prince of peace;' or that of the orthodox Editor of Calmet, 'Admirable, Counsellor, Divine Interpreter, Mighty, Father of future time, Prince of Peace;' or that of Simpson, 'Wonderful, Excellent Ruler, Mighty, Father of the future age, Peaceful Prince;' or, to mention no more, that of Carpenter, 'Wonderful, Counsellor of God, Mighty, Father of the Age, Prince of Peace.' If any one of these, (excepting Lowth's) be the right version, the sense of the passage will be evidently very different from that which the common English translation seems intended to convey. I am not unreasonable, therefore, in withholding my assent to the doctrine which you would establish on the words of the prophet, till it is determined how those words ought to be translated. But you will, no doubt, contend that king James's translators have given us the true representation of the original; and as any new version by me, would of course, be treated by you as "a blunder or a sophism," I will consent, for the present, to adopt their version of the whole verse: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a

son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." And from the words thus translated, you would infer that He whose name is to be called The 'Mighty God,' is the Mighty God himself. Then the *child that is born*, the babe that was in the womb of Mary, and in the manger at Bethlehem, was *The Mighty God!* And *the Son that was given* (by Jehovah,) was *the everlasting Father*. Settle this matter, if you can, with Pseudo-Athanasius, who warns you not to confound the persons, nor to divide the substance, "For," says he, "there is one person of the Father, another of the Son." Yet Isaiah, as you say, represents the Son and the Father as the same persons. Truly, Sir, there are no obscurities, no difficulties in the orthodox system. Every thing accurately quadrates there! You cannot avoid this absurdity, nor give any admissible or plausible interpretation of the Prophet's words, as rendered in the authorized version, without allowing what Unitarians assert, that names and titles are frequently given in Scripture, not with any reference to the nature, but to the character and office of the person who bears them; to the transactions in which he is to be engaged, and even to the circumstances of the times in which he is to live. Thus, in this very section of Isaiah, one of his sons is called *Immanuel*, to denote that God was about to interpose, and deliver Ahaz and his people from the hostile designs of the kings of Israel and Syria; and another (if indeed another) is called *Maher-shalal-hash-baz*, to signify that 'the riches of Damascus, and the spoil of Samaria, were to be shortly taken away by the Assyrian king.' Guided by

this canon of interpretation, then we say, allowing that the Prophet declares that Jesus Christ shall be called 'the Mighty God;' that title implies not that he was 'the Mighty God,' but that, according to his own repeated declarations, the true God was manifested in him. His doctrine was not his, but the Father's who sent him: the works which he performed were not his, but wrought by the power of the Father, who was always present to bear witness to him. In all he did, and all he taught, he was so entirely directed by God, that, as he said to Philip, 'he who had seen him had seen the Father.' If this interpretation be not admitted, it might be contended that instead of 'the Mighty God,' the rendering should be, '*a* Mighty God,' or 'Mighty God;' and that the term God should be interpreted in an inferior sense, as it is in several passages of the Old Testament, to signify a Judge, a Prophet, or a Ruler. *

You appeal also to the well-known, but, as I apprehend the generally much-misunderstood passage in Jeremiah, "And this *is* his name whereby he shall be called the 'Lord our Righteousness.'" But by what authority, permit me to ask, do you apply this to Jesus Christ? Has Christ himself, or any of his Apostles so applied it? Surely no authors are interpreted in so loose and careless a manner, as the Sacred Writers, and especially the Prophets. The subject and the connexion are generally disregarded; even portions of sentences are violently separated from the context; and a meaning is hence extorted, which the inspired authors could not possibly have intended them to convey. The fol-

* See *Letters by Another Barrister*, p. 128.

lowing is the whole verse in which this title is found; "In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell securely; and this is his name, whereby he shall be called, 'The Lord our Righteousness.'" Does the former part of this verse describe the condition of Judah and Israel, in the days of Christ? But the Prophet has obviated all doubt respecting the time and the event to which he refers, by the two following verses, "Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, the Lord liveth which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; But the Lord liveth, which brought up, and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country (i. e. Babylonia and Assyria,) and from all countries (viz. Egypt, Philistia, and other places in which they were dispersed after the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar,) whither I have driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land." Can any thing be clearer than that we are to look to the return of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon for the fulfilment of this last part of the prediction; and to Zerubbabel their Prince, for the person to whom this title is applied?—The version of 'the orthodox Blayney,' I will not press; though I cannot think he 'translates strangely,' nor is he without the sanction of the LXX. I consider his translation however, as doubtful.* But I hope you will not abide by the

* "It encountered," we are told in a note, (p. 73,) "some deserved Oxonian reprehension from the respectable head of Oriel College, Dr. Eveleigh." Dr. Eveleigh's reprehension of this translation I have never seen; but if it be not more just and forcible than that which he bestowed on four passages in Blayney's translation of Zechariah, the learned Professor must have felt himself perfectly easy.

authorized Version in this place, and abandon it in a parallel place: that you will not disdain the aid of the learned Professor in the present instance, and court it in ch. xxxiii. 16, where we read, "In these days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this *is the name* wherewith she, (i. e. Jerusalem,) shall be called, 'the Lord our Righteousness.'" Be content with king James's translators here; and you will be able to answer your own inquiry as to the former passage; and to judge whether Unitarian expositors are not justified in saying, that prophetic names and titles are given to persons in Scripture, "not as denoting what these persons are in themselves, but as signs and evidences of what God will perform by them, or bring to pass in their time." Were I then to allow, as I am willing to do, that the last passage in Jeremiah, should be rendered so as to correspond with the first; I should still maintain that the Prophet, even if he referred to Christ, intended only to declare that Jehovah would display his righteousness by him.

You proceed to ask: "Did not the former of these Prophets, (viz. Isaiah,) also foretel, that he should be denominated 'Emanuel;' which *being interpreted*, adds the inspired St. Matthew, (i. 23,) *is* '*God with us?*'" I do not know whether you mean to intimate that St. Matthew was inspired to teach us the interpretation of the Hebrew title עמנואל? Such, indeed, seems to be your meaning, otherwise, surely, you would not lay so much stress upon a phrase so common in the writings of the Evangelists. He was certainly not inspired, I will venture to affirm, to teach us that the title so interpreted, is an evidence of the Deity of

him to whom it was applied. If it were, it would follow, that the son of Isaiah was God. For the whole scope of the passage of Isaiah in which this title occurs, demonstrates that it was designed as the prophetic name of a child to be born within a year after the announcing of his birth; and that the child to be born and to be so named, was one of the children whom Jehovah gave to the Prophet "for signs and for wonders in Israel.' See ch. viii 18. But to whomsoever the child was to be born, its birth was to take place in the reign of Ahaz, and not seven or eight hundred years afterwards; for *that* child was to eat butter and honey, when he came to years of discretion; because before that period, the king of Israel and the king of Damascus, who were attempting to dethrone Ahaz, were to be destroyed and the land, delivered from its invaders, was to be in a prosperous state. To prefigure this deliverance, and to commemorate the divine interposition by which it was to be effected, the name of this child was to be עמנואל '*Emanuel*,' or *God is with us*, (see *Ch.* viii. 10.) The name, therefore, was to denote that God would *visit* his people; would graciously interpose in their favour, and deliver them from the power of their enemies. But were I not constrained by a consideration of the whole passage, to regard the citation in the Gospel of Matthew, as only *accommodated* to the birth and character of Christ, I should still maintain that, as a direct prophecy of him, it would afford no proof of his Deity. It would signify no more than that he was destined to be the instrument of a great deliverance effected by God; and the honoured medium of divine communications to the world. He was called *Jesus*, to signify that he should save his people from

their sins; and *Emanuel* to signify that in this salvation, and the means by which it was to be accomplished, they should experience the presence of God among them. Agreeably to the declarations of the multitude who saw the widow's son restored to life, when, "a great fear came on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great Prophet is risen up amongst us; and, That God hath visited his people." As Dr. Carpenter has well observed, "It is not said, 'Jesus shall be God with us,' but 'they shall call his name GOD IS WITH US:' and God was indeed with us by Jesus; He was with us by those wonderful works which Jesus wrought, because God was with him; and he was with us by Jesus, since by him He fully revealed His own gracious purposes to mankind." *

You further ask, "Did not Christ himself, when he said to the Jews, "Before Abraham was I AM," assume the peculiar and most jealously guarded title of the Supreme Being, (*Exod.* iii. 14,) and thus aver, not simply his pre-existence, but that self-existence, which can be ascribed to God alone?" Without the slightest hesitation I answer, No. There is here no reference whatever to the title of the Supreme Being, nor any parallelism between this passage and *Exod.* iii. 14, except in the English Version. The terms in the original, are in the future tense, and the rendering ought to have been, "I will be what I will be." † Even the Version of the Seventy, Εγω ειμι ὁ Ων, will not sanction your

* *Unitarianism the Doctrine of the Gospel, 3rd. edit. p. 146.*

† אהיה אשר אהיה

question; and they have evidently misunderstood the place.* The phrase Εγω ειμι, I AM, on which you lay so much stress occurs, several times, and in every other instance is rightly translated; generally, indeed, as the Unitarians propose, to translate it here; not without incurring from you the sarcastic sneer, which you bestow upon every thing that proceeds from them. Thus *John* iv. 26, when the woman of Samaria declares her conviction, that the Messiah will come, Jesus replies, "I AM *who speak to thee*." Again, *John* viii. 24, warning the Jews of the dreadful consequences of unbelief, he says, "If ye believe not that I AM, ye will die in your sins." And in a verse almost immediately following, (28,) foretelling the results of his death and ascension, "when ye shall have lifted up the Son of man, ye shall know that I AM." And afterwards, *John* xiii. 19, having intimated the treachery of Judas to the rest of the disciples, he said, "Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I AM." Did he on these occasions assume the peculiar and most jealously guarded title of the Supreme Being?† King James's translators did not so understand him; nor, I am persuaded, do you. Yet in all the places I have cited, the expression is precisely the same as in that to which your extraordinary question relates. In all of them, it expresses not nature or existence, but character and office. And, therefore, the authorized Version in these passages, have very properly rendered Εγω ειμι 'I AM HE,' i. e. the Christ.

* Aq. and Th. more properly render ισομαι, ισομαι, & Gr. Ven. ασομαι ις ισομαι.

† It is observable that the poor man to whom Jesus had given sight, speaks of himself in precisely the same manner. "Some said, 'This is he:' others said, 'He is like him;' but he said, 'I AM.'" Εγω ειμι. See *John* ix. 9.

Would you brand them with your repeated and contemptuous marks of admiration? I wot not. Why then may not this phrase be so rendered and so understood in the place under consideration? You reply, there was nothing "in this assertion, either to satisfy the query proposed in ver. 57; or to induce the Jews, as if he had been guilty of blasphemy, to *take up stones to cast at him?*" * That it was on the ground of his being a

* In the same note in which this question is asked, it is immediately asserted, "To this measure also, (i. e. of stoning Jesus,) they resorted, when in still plainer terms he declared his Unity with God, 'I and my Father are one,' (*John* x. 30,) by which they contended that, *being a man he made himself God.*" If this passage be properly examined, it will be evident, that the Jews accused him of blasphemy, not because he had asserted, that he and the Father were one, but because he had spoken of God as his Father. They thought, or rather they pretended to think, that he had spoken of God in some peculiar sense as his Father. This is evident from the justification of himself, which our Lord condescended to offer to these unreasonable and malignant cavillers. "Is it not written in your Law, 'I said, Ye are gods?' If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?"—How any one possessing the slightest acquaintance with Scripture language, can produce this saying of our Lord as an evidence of his Unity with God, is truly astonishing. The Archdeacon, indeed, does not state what he means by Unity, but it is pretty evident that he means Unity of nature and substance. Nothing can be well plainer, than that our Lord meant no more than Unity of counsel and design. And the best interpretation of the phrase ἓν ἐσμεν will be found in *John* xvii. 11, 20, 22, 23. 1 *Cor.* iii. 8. *Ephes.* ii. 14.—Calvin, Erasmus, Beza, and many commentators, both of the Romish and the Reformed Churches, deny that these words have any reference to Unity of substance. "Abusi sunt hoc loco veteres," says, Calvin, "ut probarent Christum Patri ὁμοούσιον. Neque enim Christus de unitate substantiæ disputat, sed de consensu quem cum Patre habet, quicquid scil. geritur a Christo, Patris virtute confirmatum iri." Not all the ancients: for not only Origen, but Alexander of Alexandria, Basil, Chrysostom, Athanasius, and others, interpret the passage as Calvin himself does.

blasphemer that the Jews intended to stone him, is a conjecture of your own, not warranted by any thing in the history; nor is it necessary to account for their violence Of the query proposed in ver. 57, which arose out of a wilful and malignant perversion of his words, our Lord with becoming dignity takes no notice. He refers to what he had before said of Abraham's having seen his day. It seems, indeed, scarcely possible for any unprejudiced person to read the whole passage, and not perceive at once that it conveys no such doctrine as you have attempted to derive from it. The day that Abraham saw, was not a day co-eval with himself, but the Gospel-day, the day in which the nations of the world were to be in a peculiar manner blessed in his descendants. The person, whose day this was emphatically called, who was to dispense the predicted blessings, was not necessarily a person existing prior to the Patriarch, or co-eval with him. Both he, and his day were existing then only in the counsels of that infinitely wise Being, who sees the end from the beginning, and calls things that are not, but which he has determined shall be, things that are. No one imagines that Abraham actually saw the day of Jesus, that he was living during the ministry of our Lord; but as Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians, has observed, almost as a comment upon this passage, "The Scriptures having foreseen that God would justify the Gentiles be faith, proclaimed before glad tidings to Abraham, saying, Through thee all nations shall be blessed." In like manner the clause "Before Abraham was, I AM HE," clearly signifies, that previous to the time of Abraham, God had appointed that Jesus should be the Messiah; as the Apostle Peter affirms him to have been 'fore ordained

before the foundation of the world, though he was manifested in the last times.' In the same manner Christians are said to be 'chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world;' and Christ himself is spoken of, in the Apocalypse, as 'a Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world;' which event is more accurately described by Peter as 'fore ordained' before that period. It is only by thus interpreting this phrase, that the pertinency of our Lord's observation can fully appear. The assertion of his pre-existence or his self-existence would have answered little purpose in illustrating or proving his former assertion that Abraham had seen his day. Suppose it to be, 'Abraham saw my day, he rejoiced in the prospect of the blessings which were to be derived from my ministry to all the nations of the earth, because I am the self-existent Jehovah, or a pre-existent Spirit;' and there appears little force or connexion in the remark. But on the other hand, consider it as it has been now interpreted, 'Abraham foresaw that a time would come, when all the peoples of the earth would be blessed in his family, because, even before his days, before the promise was given to him, I was destined in the counsel of my Father to preach the glad-tidings of the kingdom;' and the reasoning of our Lord is just and conclusive, and every way worthy of his wisdom. To those who wish to see all that can be alleged in favour of the Unitarian exposition of this text, I would recommend Mr. Belsham's *Calm Inquiry*, Mr. Simpson's *Essays on the Language of Scripture*, Dr. Carpenter's *Unitarianism the Doctrine of the Gospel*, and Cardale's *True Doctrine of the New Testament*, &c.

Your next inquiry is, "And has he not in the Apocalypse, by a similar reference to the Old Testament, (*Isaiah* xliv. 6,) 'I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last,' distinctly affirmed his Unity with the '*Lord of Hosts*?" To which it might be a sufficient answer to observe, that if he has, the *Lord of Hosts* can bleed and die! a conclusion from which all who are not wedded to a system, would start with horror. Yet this conclusion is inevitable on your hypothesis; for he who speaks thus of himself at the conclusion of the book, is at the beginning as well as in other parts of it described, as "he that liveth, but was dead; as the first begotten of the dead; as having loved us, and washed us from our sins, in his own blood." But whatever may be the meaning of this phraseology, it cannot denote the Unity of Jesus Christ with the Lord of Hosts; for the Apocalypse abounds in passages which distinguish Jesus Christ from the Supreme God in a manner the most clear and decisive.

There may be, and probably is, an allusion in this phrase to more than one passage in Isaiah, where the Lord of Hosts is represented as speaking of Himself: and it must further be granted, that according to the text of Griesbach, this very title is in the Apocalypse itself, (ch. i. 8,) given to 'the Lord God, the Almighty;' yet it does not thence unquestionably follow that it is in both places to be interpreted in the same manner. Regard must be had, in such cases, to the different subjects of whom the same thing appears to be predicated. Thus it is said of Jehovah, "Thy years are throughout all generations, thy years shall have no end;" (*Ps.*

cii. 24, 27,) it is also said of Melchisedek, that he had "neither beginning of days, nor end of life;" yet who thence ascribes to Melchisedek the attribute of eternity. The essential difference in the subjects compels us to interpret what is said of them in a very different manner. So in the instance under our consideration, the terms which, when used of the Lord of Hosts, are expressive of an attribute, when used of One who calls the Lord of Hosts his God and Father, must be regarded as no more than a title. This I maintain is according to a legitimate rule of interpretation. And as a title of Jesus, these words do not denote his Unity with the Lord of Hosts; but are strictly consistent with his perfect humanity. They may signify, 'that the scheme of divine providence begins and ends with him, and through its whole progress, has some relation to him: that from first to last the attention of providence was continually to be turned upon him, and a perpetual regard to be paid to him. Of him Moses and the Prophets spake: with reference to his mission, all the circumstances of the ancient world were arranged and effected; and to the end of time his doctrine is to be the object of the divine care.' Or it may be understood in a more restricted sense, as indeed the context and the whole strain of the book, so far as I understand it, seem to suggest, viz. 'that as he had been honoured by the Father as the instrument by which the kingdom of heaven had been established, and all its privileges and powers dispensed to the subjects of it, so he was to be empowered, at the conclusion of that kingdom, to exercise a regal and judicial power, and "to give to every man as his work should be."'

You proceed to your last inquiry, "Did not Zechariah prophesy; "*In that day,*" *saith the Lord,* (JEHOVAH again,) "*they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced;*" and does not the inspired St. John directly apply this to Christ?" Undoubtedly the Evangelist does *apply* this to Christ, as in the verse immediately preceding he had *applied* another passage of Scripture, or rather the substance of two or three passages, 'A bone of him shall not be broken;' in both cases without meaning to assert that the passages so applied, were direct prophecies of Christ. But are you perfectly sure, Sir, that you have quoted the words of the Prophet accurately? I grant that you have accurately cited the passage from the common English Version; and you may have done so from a full persuasion that it correctly represents the original. I must, however, beg leave to differ from you on this point, and to maintain with Abp. Newcome, Kennicott, H. Owen, and many other eminent critics, that according to the *true text* of the original, the Prophet's words are, "*They shall look upon Him whom they pierced.*" * If this be right,

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* The present Hebrew text is וחביטו אלי את אשר דקרו. Instead of אלי 49 MSS. of Kenn. and 13 of De Rossi, and many others in the margin, read אליו: and this reading is favoured by עליו in the next versicle. Two of the earliest editions also, and the Talmudists have this reading. It is so quoted by the Evangelist. All the ancient Versions, it is true, favour the common text. One valuable MS. of LXX. reads εἰς ὃν; and Holmes's Collation will probably discover many more. The Aldine edition has both readings πρὸς μὲ, εἰς ὃν. Ignatius and Justin Martyr have εἰς ὃν. Irenæus and Tertullian render in the third person. Blayney is unwilling to alter the reading, but considers אלי not as a compound of אל and י, but as merely the preposition. Bauer observes that if the common reading be retained, it may be rendered, "*respicient ad me,* Deum, opis implorandæ causâ, *quod attinet ad eum, quem transfixerunt.*

and you will not easily prove it wrong, the prophecy by Zechariah, and the application of it by the inspired Apostle decide nothing as to the nature of Christ.

To one inquiry more, proposed in note 49, (p. 72,) I must briefly reply, "Christ," you say, "throughout the New Testament is commonly stiled Κυριος, the Lord; and by Κυριος throughout the Old Testament, the Seventy translate the Hebrew JEHOVAH. Does this supply no argument for the Unity of the two Persons to whom those appellations are respectively attached?" To one accustomed to read the Version of the Seventy, this must appear a very extraordinary question. The frequent occurrence of the term Κυριος as the translation of the Hebrew אדני ADONAI, one would think, might clearly show in what sense the writers of the New Testament applied that term to Christ. Did Paul imagine that he was addressing a second Person in the Godhead, when on the road to Damascus, he inquired Τις ει, Κυριε; Did the woman of Samaria suppose she was speaking to Jehovah, when she said to Jesus Κυριε, θεωρω ὁτι προφητης ει συ? Had the poor man to whom Jesus gave sight, any notion that Jesus was God, when being asked by him, whether he believed on the Son of God, he replied, Τις εστι Κυριε; "The fact is," as Dr. Carpenter has justly observed, but which I could not have presumed to state to a person of your learning, had you not put so strange a question, "the word implies no more than that the Person to whom it is applied, has *authority* or *power*; and very frequently it is only a term of respect, given to a person without any reference to his superiority. It may be translated, *Master*,

*Sir*, or *Lord*, according to the circumstances of the case." *

I think, Sir, I have now noticed every thing in the Appendix to your last Charge that requires or deserves attention. In so multifarious a production, some topics may have been overlooked; none have been designedly passed by, but such as were merely repetitions of what had been said in your former Charge, seasoned with a little more of banter and sarcasm; and which had been sufficiently adverted to in the '*Three Letters*.' Having thus answered, to the best of my ability, all your inquiries, and, I trust, in such a manner as to prove that they are in no degree adverse to the doctrine of Unitarianism; I hope I may now be permitted, in my turn, to propose a few questions for your solution.

The doctrine of the Trinity, it *is* asserted, is a Scripture-doctrine, and according to Bishop Beveridge and some others, plainly revealed in the Sacred Writings: How is it then that so many different accounts are given of the doctrine, even by the most learned, and reputedly the most orthodox members of your own Church? All of them cannot be equally right. If the doctrine 'be a prime fundamental doctrine,' the belief of which is necessary to salvation, can it be a matter of little moment *how* it is believed, or what particulars are held to be comprized in it? Can the Realists and the Nominalists, the Athanasians and the Pseudo-Athanasians, the Indwellers and the Swedenborgians, with many

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* *Unitarianism the Doctrine of the Gospel*, p. 191.

others, too numerous to be here mentioned, be all equally sound in the faith, and all equally in the way of salvation? Is it of no moment whether a man profess the Ciceronian Trinity, or the Cartesian Trinity, or the Platonic Trinity, or the Aristotelian Trinity, or the Trinity of the Mobile, provided he so far renounces his reason as to maintain that One is Three, and Three are One? The impudent forger of the Athanasian Creed, has indeed taken upon himself to settle this matter, and to denounce everlasting damnation against all who symbolize not with him; but if he be right, few will be saved. The doctrine of the Trinity, in whatever form it be stated, must, I am well aware, be a mystery, which no definitions can explain, and no reasoning prove; yet as certain terms and forms of speech are necessarily used in propounding this doctrine, it is desirable to know in what sense these terms and phrases are taken by those who employ them. For as words are the signs of ideas, they who use words, must imagine at least that they have ideas which they intend the words should signify. When we are told, then, that there are three persons in one God, we naturally ask what we are to understand by *person*,—what idea, what notion does it express? Mr. Locke defines *person* to be "a thinking, intelligent Being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself." Is the accuracy of this definition allowed? Then the three Persons of the Trinity, are three distinct, conscious, intelligent Beings, each having reason and reflection, each considering itself as itself. But perhaps you will not allow Mr. Locke's definition to be applicable to this subject; for there seem to be amongst professed Trinitarians very various opinions concerning the meaning of

the term. Are we to understand by the term 'person,' *a real substance*, or merely *a name, an attribute, a mode of existence, a relation, a property*, or *a posture?* And by the three persons of the Godhead, three internal relations of the one substance of the Deity to itself, or three external relations of the one substance of the Deity to mankind, or essential, formal, inadequate conceptions or primalities, viz. Power, Intellect, and Will, or three subsistencies, three diversities, or three somewhats? Is it presuming too much to ask you to furnish a clue, by which an inquirer after truth may be guided through this labyrinth, in which some of the most intelligent and quick-sighted of your own church, after jostling each other without much tenderness or ceremony, appear to have been bewildered and lost. Dr. T. Sherlock tells us, that "to say there are three divine persons and not three distinct infinite minds, is both heresy and nonsense;" and contends that they are "three substantially distinct intelligent Beings, as distinct as Peter, James, and John." Yet the University of Oxford decreed this to be false, impious, and heretical, contrary to the doctrine of the Catholic Church, and especially of the Church of England; and approved of the hypothesis of Dr. Wallis that the three persons are only three modes or relations, which the Deity bears to his creatures. Can these different hypotheses, maintained by the members of the Church of England, be both, or either of them reconciled with the Athanasian or the Nicene Creeds? Is the first of them any thing less than Tritheism; or is the latter of them any thing more, in fact, than Unitarianism? Are three Beings one Being, because the substance of the three is the same? Is one person three persons, be-

cause he sustains three characters? If we admit with Sherlock, Waterland, and others, that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, are three distinct, conscious, intelligent agents, or persons, how are we to understand their mutual relations; what notion are we to form of their unity? Are we to maintain that the Father alone is self-existent, the root and fountain of Divinity, that the two other persons derive their existence from Him, the Son being generated by an eternal necessary emanation, or by the Father's contemplating his own perfections; and the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father, or from both the Father and the Son, and so both being in this respect inferior to the Father, but in all other respects independent of Him, and equal to Him? Or are we to consider them as united by a mutual penetration of each other's substance, by what is technically called Emperichoresis, or Circumincession? If we adopt the former of these hypotheses, do we not admit that in the Trinity there is one supreme, and two subordinate Beings? And how can these be each truly God? How can the Person generated, and the Person proceeding, be coeval and co-eternal with the Person from whom they proceeded and emanated. If we adopt the latter, do we not maintain what is utterly unintelligible, and assert that three absolutely perfect Beings occupy the same infinite space, and thus, in fact, preclude all idea of personal distinction? If rejecting these notions, we betake ourselves to Wallis and South, and acknowledge the three persons only as attributes or relations, do we not thus also annihilate all personal distinctions, and incur the censure which you pass on Unitarians, not in respect of the 1st ch. of John alone, but of a large part of the New Testament, of "making nonsense of it?"

With the doctrine of the Trinity, concerning which I have thus taken the liberty of proposing to you a few of ten thousand difficulties with which it is encumbered, the doctrine of the *Incarnation* is intimately connected, and concerning this also, I must beg leave to trouble you with one or two inquiries. You maintain that about eighteen hundred years ago, the second person of the Trinity entered into the womb of a Jewish virgin, was there united to a human embryo, was born, passed through the successive stages of infancy, youth, and manhood, and finally died on a cross at Jerusalem. Such, at least, is the faith of the Established Church, or such passages as the following, which must certainly be addressed to God, and not to a man, but which I never hear without shuddering, would not occur in her religious services:—'Thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb. When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, &c. By the mystery of thy holy incarnation, by thy nativity and circumcision, by thine agony and bloody sweat, by thy cross and passion, by thy precious death and burial.' You will not allow that you offer religious homage to a man, to whom alone such language is at all suitable; nor will you admit, perhaps, when closely pressed, that God is capable of suffering or of death. You address neither God nor man, but a Being compounded of both, a God-Man, Θεανθρωπος. The divine and human natures, you will say, were united in Christ in such a manner, that these two natures constituted one person. This position appears to me not merely inconceivable, but impossible. You will, perhaps, correct me, and demonstrate the possibility of such a union. I do not ask whether with the Apollinarians we must maintain, that the divine Person

supplied the place of a soul in the human person? or with the Eutychians, that the human nature was absorbed by the divine, as a drop of water is absorbed by the ocean into which it falls; or with the Nestorians, that the two natures were perfectly distinct; or with the council of Ephesus, (that condemned Nestorius, and established what has since been held the orthodox doctrine,) that the second Person or the Logos of God was substantially or *hypostatically* united to the body and the soul of the man Jesus? Considered in any way the union of God with a man, as the doctrine of the Incarnation supposes, is utterly incredible. "The words *God* and *man* are among those which are in most common use, and the meaning of which is best defined and understood. There cannot (as with regard to the doctrine of the Trinity) be any controversy about the sense in which they are here used, or about the ideas which they are intended to express. These ideas are perfectly irreconcileable with each other." The idea we form of God, is that of a Being self-existent, eternal, immutable, impassible, omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient: the idea we form of man, is that of a being necessarily dependent, mortal, mutable, finite in duration, power, and knowledge. Can there possibly be a being compounded of such opposite attributes, a being at the same time infinite and finite; all-powerful and impotent; omnipresent and limited to a small point of space; omniscient and imperfect in knowledge? Are not "the ideas as incompatible, and the language as absurd, as if one should say, magnificently-mean; partially-universal; feebly-strong; false-truth; righteous-dishonesty; wise-folly; long-brevity; bright-obscurity; or should put together any other

terms, or ideas, which absolutely refuse to unite, and the one of which extinguishes and destroys the other?" * —All the language of orthodoxy is formed on the position that the Union of the divine and human natures took place in the womb of the Virgin, continued even on the cross, and in Joseph's tomb; and continues still. Then has not the Deity, one of whose essential attributes is immutability, undergone a change? Since it has taken the human nature into itself, is the Godhead precisely what it was before? Or, if the three Persons, be three distinct and separate intelligences, does not the second Person vary from the other two, and from what itself was prior to the Incarnation? Has the perfect man, to which the divine nature was united, become perfect God? Does not this constitute a fourth Person in the Godhead?—When I contrast with this strange system, not to call it by a harsher name, the simple doctrine of Unitarianism, can I have any hesitation which to choose?

But notwithstanding the difficulties, the apparent incongruities and contradictions which the advocates of the doctrine of the Trinity, not only acknowledge to belong inseparably to it, but even consider as the most appropriate and convincing evidence of its truth; if the doctrine were unquestionably revealed, I could not refuse to receive it. If God had inscribed it in legible characters on the Tables of testimony which he delivered to Moses, or proclaimed it with his own voice from Mount Sinai; if he had authorized any of his inspired Prophets to announce it to his people; if Jesus had received com-

* *Cappe's Crit. Remarks, Vol. ii. p. 72.*

mandment from the Father to teach it to his disciples, and had charged them to publish it to the world, I should deem it incumbent upon me, at the command of God, to lay prostrate the understanding derived from his inspiration, and on this subject to renounce the use of that reason which he has made the glory of my frame. Happily, no such hard duty is imposed! For if any thing can be clear and certain it is this, that the Scriptures, from the beginning of them to the end, teach the doctrine of the strict and proper Unity of God; not Unity of counsel and design merely, but Unity of Person. This you deny. Let me then ask you; Is not this true, at least of the writings of the Old Testament? Do they not abound in the most express declarations that God is One? Is there a single passage that explicitly teaches, or from which it can be undeniably inferred that this one God consists of three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit? Is there any such passage in the Mosaic Laws? In those fine devotional compositions, which form the Book of Psalms, is the Trinity once invoked? Is it not manifest, that the writers were entirely ignorant of a Tri-une God? Is it not an almost universally admitted fact, that the Jews in every age were uninstructed in this mystery? And can it be supposed, that they to whom were committed the Oracles of God, would be left in ignorance of 'a prime fundamental article of faith,' an article which we are now told, all who would be saved, must believe? That they had formed very exalted conceptions of the Personage who was to appear as their Messiah, is evident, but did they expect that he would be the everliving God, or a second person of the Godhead? Have we not the most express testimony from various quarters that

they expected a man like themselves? To whom was prayer addressed in the Jewish Church? to whom by Jesus Christ himself? to whom by those whom he taught to say, 'Our Father who art in heaven'? Is the object of worship the same now as in their days? Do they who pray to God, according to the Liturgical forms of the Established Church, worship the same God, that the Jews, our Lord, and his disciples worshipped? Was Jehovah, the Father, the God-man, and the Holy Spirit?

When we turn to the New Testament, where do we meet with any statement of the doctrine of the Trinity? Did our Lord himself teach it? You will say perhaps that he left it to be inferred from the Baptismal Formula, and one or two other passages. Was it inferred by his first disciples? Or is it credible that a doctrine of so much moment, would be communicated in such a manner? And have not all the passages which some have supposed to suggest it, been understood by many persons of sound learning and judgment, to bear a very different meaning? Has not every single text of this kind, been abandoned by one or another even of orthodox interpreters? * In the whole conduct of Jesus as described by the Evangelists, do we perceive any thing that proves him to be God? Did he not uniformly speak of God as of a Being distinct from himself, and with all the reverence that a pious man habitually displays towards his Maker? Did he not pray to Him both openly and in private? Did he not uniformly act and speak and feel as a perfect man? On any occasion did

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* *Scripture S. Trinitatis Revelatrix Autore Hermanno Cingallo.*

be betray a consciousness that he was more than man; that he was the Supreme God as well as Jesus of Nazareth? Was he received by the people, or by his disciples in that character? When the multitudes were astonished at his miracles, had they known that he was God, would they have been content with exclaiming, "a great prophet hath risen up amongst us," or have "glorified God who had given such power unto men?" Did Martha, who was one of those whom he peculiarly honoured with his friendship, suspect that he was God, or God-man, when she said, "I know that whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee?" Can you point out one circumstance in the whole of the intercourse between Jesus and the Twelve, who surely could not be ignorant of his true nature, which proves that they owned him as their God? Did Peter know that he was God, when he rebuked him, or when with oaths and curses he denied him? Did Thomas know it, when he said, "Let us also go with him, that we may *die* with him"? Did Judas know it, when he delivered him into the hands of the Jewish rulers? Did the two disciples who went on the day of the resurrection to Emmaus, know it, when they expressed to the supposed stranger, their grief and disappointment at his death? In all the discourses of the first preachers of the Gospel, recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, is there any one expression from which it can be inferred that they believed him to be God? They call him a Man approved of God, a Prince, and a Saviour, they describe him as being then exalted to the right hand of God, i. e. to the enjoyment of great dignity and power; but not a word falls from them relating to his Deity, not a hint of the distinction of the Godhead into three

Persons, of whom Christ was one. Can this silence be accounted for, consistently with the truth of the doctrine of the Trinity? If this were really a doctrine of the New Testament, would it have been deemed necessary, as it has been, ever since the third century, to employ such terms and phrases in the exposition of it, as are not to be found in the Scriptures? In the case of doctrines generally admitted to be revealed, is not the language of the Sacred Writers not only sufficiently explicit, but in every respect the best that can be adopted? How is it then, that no such terms as *Trinity*, *Persons of the Godhead*, *God-Man*, *God the Son*, and *God the Holy Ghost*, are to be met with in any part of the Old or New Testaments? Yet must not such terms have frequently occurred had the doctrine been a Jewish or a Christian doctrine? Would not the minds of the apostles of our Lord have been most deeply impressed by it? Would they not have been as anxious as those who now hold it are, to call the attention of mankind to it? Would it not have been attacked with vehemence both by Jews and Gentiles? Would not the first preachers of Christianity have been called upon continually to explain and to defend it?—"to exhibit it in its relations, and carefully to guard against the misapprehensions to which it is so liable? From the very nature of the human mind, if their minds at all resembled those of other men, the fact that their Master was the Almighty, clothed in flesh, must have appeared continually in their writings, in direct assertions, in allusions, in the strongest possible expressions of feeling, in a thousand different forms. As a fundamental doctrine of our religion, it is one which they must have been constantly employed in teaching. If it were a

doctrine of Christianity, would not the evidence for it burst from every part of the New Testament, in a blaze of light? Do you think we should be left to collect the proof of such an article, and the evidence of incomparably the most astonishing fact that ever occurred upon earth, from some expressions scattered here and there, the greater part of them being dropt incidentally; and that one of the most plausible arguments for it would be found in the omission of the Greek article in four or five texts?" *

If these inquiries were not more than sufficient to manifest the weakness of your cause, and to exercise your ingenuity as its advocate, they might be increased almost without end. Indeed, as it has been well observed by the writer to whom I have just referred, "there is hardly a fact or conversation recorded in the history of our Saviour's ministry, which may not afford ground for such questions as I have proposed." I might add many concerning the supposed personality and Deity of the Holy Spirit; and many concerning the important concessions and admissions of the ancient Christian Fathers, their silence on points now chiefly dwelt upon, the language of those reputed most orthodox, the confessedly gradual developement of the doctrine of the Trinity, the reluctance of the unlearned to receive it in any form, and many other topics connected with the history of early opinions. But I forbear, from compassion both to you and myself. For as I could not

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* See *A Statement of Reasons for not believing the Doctrines of Trinitarians, &c occasioned by Professor Stuart's Letters to Mr. Channing, Boston, N. A.* An excellent pamphlet, and well deserving of being re-printed in this country.

fail to be oppressed by the multitude of questions, which, if I were to pursue the subject to its full extent, I should have to ask, your condition, if you were to attempt to answer them, would be indeed painful and desperate.

Here, then, I conclude my Letters; for the length, and I fear I must add, for the inaccuracies of which, I ought to apologize to you, and to such as may honour them with a perusal. They have been written in great haste, amidst continued and unavoidable avocations, and frequently under great depression of spirits. Had I enjoyed more leisure, and better health, I might have compressed them, and rendered them less unworthy of the public eye. With all their numerous faults, they will, I hope, have answered, in some good degree, the end I had in view, and which, as I have already stated it, I need not here repeat. With these Letters, the controversy also, on my part, closes. I entered upon it with reluctance; I have pursued it with very painful emotions; and I gladly relinquish it for ever. Yet, Sir, if you are disposed calmly and seriously to discuss the evidence of Unitarianism, on the ground either of Scripture or of Antient Testimony, or of both; and on the condition of mingling with it nothing of a personal nature, nothing relating to the supposed consequences of the doctrine, or of the talents and character of those who profess it; such is the importance of the subject, I should not feel myself at liberty to decline the defence of what I hold to be "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." But to nothing in the way of banter or sarcasm, to nothing approaching to the stile and temper of your last two Charges, their Appendixes, and Notes,

from whatever quarter they may come, will I attend again. I have done what I thought the circumstances in which I was placed required, in vindication of the doctrines I deem sacred, and of the characters of those to whom I owe great respect, and with that I shall remain satisfied: ready, when ever it shall clearly be my duty zealously, but mildly, to defend the great principles of Unitarianism, which are identified in my mind with the Gospel of the grace of God; but firmly resolved to engage no more in a contest for minor and unessential points, at the serious hazard of imbibing the spirit which I disapprove in others, and of offending against that charity which is "the end of the commandment," and "the bond of perfectness," and without which, all knowledge and all faith are unprofitable and vain.

I am, Reverend Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

C. WELLBELOVED.

*York, June* 1, 1824.

THE END.

*Lately published,*

BY THE SAME AUTHOR,

I.—THREE LETTERS, addressed to the Ven. and Rev. F. WRANGHAM, M. A. Archdeacon of Cleveland, In reply to his Remarks on Unitarianism and Unitarians; contained in his Charge delivered to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of Cleveland, in July, 1823. Second Edition.

II.—UNITARIANS NOT GUILTY OF DENYING THE LORD WHO BOUGHT THEM: A SERMON, preached before the Unitarian Association of Hull, &c. &c. on Thursday, Sept. 18, 1823.

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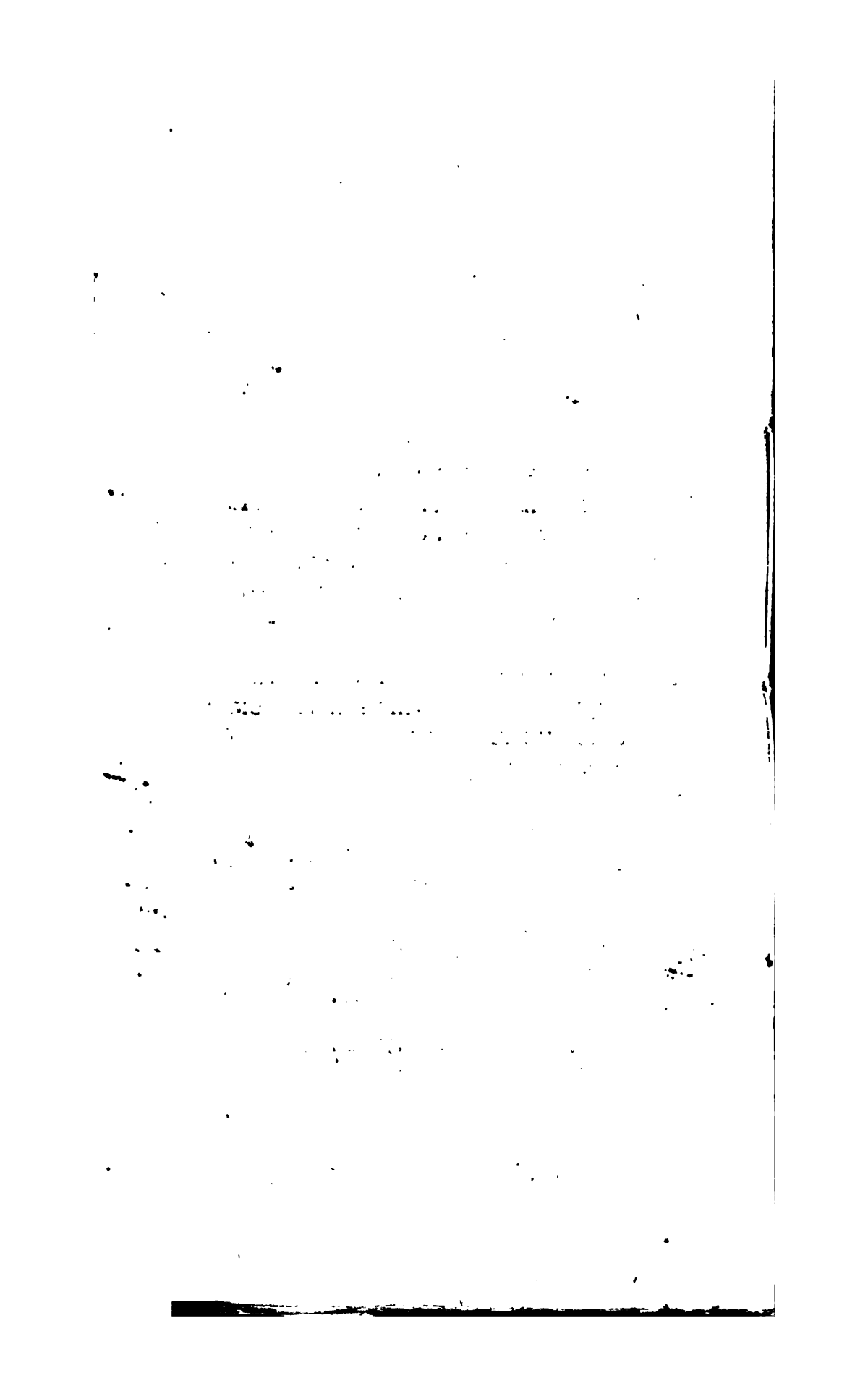

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